United Nations A/C.1/55/PV.3

General Assembly
Fifty-fifth session

Official Records

First Committee
3rd meeting
Monday, 2 October 2000, 10 a.m.
New York

Chairman: Mr. U Mya Than ..... (Myanmar)

The meeting was called to order at 10.10 a.m.

The Chairman: We are delighted to have the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, His Excellency Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala with us today. We thank Mr. Dhanapala for his presence at the first substantive meeting of the Committee.

In accordance with the adopted programme of work, the Committee will today begin its general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items. Before proceeding to that stage, allow me as the presiding officer of this body to make a statement.

Statement by the Chairman

The United Nations Millennium Assembly is a propitious occasion for reflection, rededication and resolution. Let us, therefore, reflect deeply on the progress we have made so far in the field of arms control and disarmament. Let us rededicate ourselves to our common goals, objectives and priorities. Let us also resolve to take decisive, concrete steps to advance the course of disarmament, both nuclear and non-nuclear, at the dawn of the new millennium.

In the Millennium Declaration, the world's leaders agreed to strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons; to take concerted action to end illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons; and to address other issues of conventional arms control, including the issue of anti-personnel mines. Directives in the Declaration will be the broad guidelines for our work in the First Committee.

Armament or disarmament — these words originate in our minds. That is why our security perceptions are so important. When it comes to security perceptions, beauty lies in the eyes of the beholder. All arms control and disarmament issues — be they nuclear, conventional or space weapons — present us with crossroads. We can choose the path towards building up armaments and seeking security therein; or we can choose the path towards arms control and disarmament in the interest of the cooperative security of all parties concerned, with the political and security environment permitting.

The 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferations of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is a good example of this. Prior to the Conference, a wide range of negative developments had prevailed and contributed to a prolonged impasse in international arms control and disarmament efforts. Despite all of those negative factors, the nuclear-weapon States in that particular instance upheld broader visions of security perceptions and went the extra mile to demonstrate their political will and flexibility. As a result, the 2000 Review Conference had a positive outcome. I therefore urge that security perceptions and policies of the Member States be reviewed and readjusted so that they may be more conducive to arms control and disarmament and to the maintenance of international peace and security.

This record contains the text of speeches delivered in English and of the interpretation of speeches delivered in the other languages. Corrections should be submitted to the original languages only. They should be incorporated in a copy of the record and sent under the signature of a member of the delegation concerned to the Chief of the Verbatim Reporting Service, room C-178. Corrections will be issued after the end of the session in a consolidated corrigendum.

00-66771 (E)

When we look at the progress we have made in the field of arms control and disarmament in the past year, since the fifty-fourth session of the General Assembly, we find it to be a mixed record. In my view, one major event happened in the year 2000; and another major event has not yet happened. The major event that happened was the significant success of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. You may recall that, prior to the Review Conference, there prevailed a wide range of negative developments that contributed to a prolonged impasse in global, nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament efforts. As a result, predictions for the outcome of the Review Conference had been quite gloomy.

Contrary to these predictions, however, it successfully concluded its deliberations with consensus texts on key issues relating to nuclear disarmament, nuclear non-proliferation and the peaceful uses of nuclear energy. The combined efforts of all States parties to reach consensus and the active contribution of non-governmental organizations led to this positive outcome. Indeed, it was the first time in 15 years that a full consensus was achieved in the form of a Final Document. This Final Document will serve as a sound basis for making further progress in the field of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

It was, indeed, a remarkable achievement that the States parties were able to agree on realistic and practical steps to further nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation, matters having a profound impact on the international security of the States parties and on international peace and security. The Conference reaffirmed the importance of the Treaty as the world's primary multilateral instrument for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. It also underscored the vital importance of nuclear disarmament and its crucial substantive link to nuclear non-proliferation.

Most importantly, the unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament — to which all States parties are committed under article VI — has strengthened their existing obligation under article VI, making explicit for the first time a firm commitment to the total elimination of nuclear weapons, albeit with no time-frame indicated. Furthermore, consensus was also reached that the total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons.

These citations clearly reflect the general concern of the international community over the continuing risks posed to mankind by the possible use of nuclear weapons. I should, however, like to sound a note of caution here. There is little ground for euphoria and complacency. May I remind members that crucial tests and tremendous tasks lie ahead of us. The crucial tests will be at the sessions of the Conference on Disarmament, the forthcoming meetings of the NPT Preparatory Committee and the 2005 NPT Review Conference, the sessions of the First Committee, the Disarmament Commission and other disarmament forums. We have to wait and see whether the nuclear-weapon States and other States parties will measure up to their commitments in the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. So far, the test of the 2000 session of the Conference on Disarmament has been negative. I sincerely hope that the remaining crucial tests will prove to be positive.

The tremendous tasks that lie ahead of us are the effective measures of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation to be undertaken in implementation of the Final Document of the 2000 NPT Review Conference. I sincerely hope that these tasks will be accomplished in an expeditious and satisfactory manner.

Another major event this year was the failure of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work for 2000, let alone to conduct substantive negotiations. It is incumbent on all States members of the Conference on Disarmament to overcome the present impasse and to ensure that the Conference agrees to a programme of work at very beginning of the 2001 session in January next year and starts its substantive work immediately. To that end, all States members of the Conference on Disarmament should go the extra mile in demonstrating their political will and maximum flexibility. What we should do in this Committee is to reflect in our draft resolution on the report of the Conference our strong determination and commitment, in appropriate language, to agreeing to a programme of work and to starting substantive work in the Conference immediately at the beginning of the 2001 session.

At the dawn of the new millennium, nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation remain the

highest priorities on our arms control and disarmament agenda. The assignment of the highest priority to the question of nuclear disarmament in the Final Document of the first special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament is still valid and relevant.

Significant progress has been made in bilateral nuclear-arms reduction measures taken by the United States and the Russian Federation. We should like to express our deep appreciation for these achievements. We look forward to the early entry into force of START II, to the full and effective implementation of the Treaty by those States and to the commencement of the START III negotiations as soon as possible. We also appreciate unilateral measures taken by other nuclear-weapon States.

The nuclear threat is global; so is the challenge of nuclear disarmament. For this reason, the issues of nuclear disarmament need to be addressed at the Conference on Disarmament, the single multilateral forum dealing with disarmament, and other multilateral disarmament forums. We fervently hope that we shall be able to make substantive progress in the multilateral context as we enter the twenty-first century.

For several years now, two recurrent draft resolutions on nuclear disarmament, adopted by the General Assembly with the support of the overwhelming majority of the Member States, have called for the establishment of an ad hoc committee or an appropriate subsidiary body in the Conference on Disarmament to deal with nuclear disarmament. I sincerely hope that this will materialize at the beginning of the 2001 session of the Conference.

There is now an emerging convergence of views that the process of nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons should include, among other things, the entry into force and effective implementation of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and, pending its entry into force, a moratorium on nuclear-test explosions; the immediate commencement in the Conference on Disarmament, on the basis of the report of the Special Coordinator (CD/1299) and the mandate contained therein, of negotiations on a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices; and the speedy completion of the draft treaty within the next five years; a phased programme of further deep reductions of nuclear arsenals and effective measures in nuclear disarmament leading to the total elimination of nuclear weapons; and the conclusion of an international legal instrument or instruments on adequate security assurances to non-nuclear-weapon States.

It is therefore imperative that the Conference on Disarmament commence its negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty immediately at the beginning of its 2001 session. Moreover, it is also essential that the question of the preservation of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM) be properly addressed. Persistent reports of plans to establish a national missile defence system and of efforts to amend the ABM Treaty have been casting a shadow over the future of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament.

In this connection, President Clinton's recent decision to pass on to the next United States administration the decision on the deployment of a national missile defence system is helpful and has provided a much-needed opportunity for reconsideration. All States, especially those directly concerned, should use it to the fullest extent to seriously gauge the impact that the deployment of a national missile defence system may have on existing multilateral treaties and on global disarmament itself.

Although the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) has not yet entered into force, the number of signatories and ratifying States has steadily increased to 160 and 63 respectively. Nevertheless, of the 44 States whose ratifications are essential for the entry into force of the Treaty, only 30 — among them three nuclear-weapon States: France, the Russian Federation and the United Kingdom — have so far ratified the Treaty. Three of the 44 States — the Democratic People's Republic of Korea, India and Pakistan — have not yet signed the Treaty. I fervently hope that all the States concerned will sign and deposit their instruments of ratification promptly, so as to allow the Treaty to enter into force as soon as possible. Undoubtedly, such actions will contribute in large measure to nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

Preparatory work for the entry into force of the CTBT continues within the CTBT Organization (CTBTO) Preparatory Commission. I welcome the

agreement to regulate the relationship between the United Nations and the CTBTO Preparatory Commission, which was signed by the Secretary-General and Executive Secretary of the CTBTO Preparatory Commission on 26 May 2000. The conclusion of the agreement provides the framework for cooperation between the two organizations. The agreement will enter into force upon its approval by the General Assembly, which is expected to be granted during this session.

The establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes an effective measure of nuclear non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament within specified geographical areas, and it contributes to international peace and security. The magnitude of the geographical areas and the political impact of nuclear-weapon-free zones is very substantial and significant. Nearly half of our planet and nearly two thirds of the countries on the face of the earth are now covered by nuclear-weapon-free zones. We warmly welcome and strongly encourage any genuine efforts to establish nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned.

Recently we have witnessed the undertaking of a new initiative in this respect to establish a single-State nuclear-weapon-free status, or zone. We warmly welcome the declaration of Mongolia's nuclear-weapon-free status. I am also delighted to learn that the five nuclear-weapon States will make a joint statement in the First Committee this week, providing security assurances to Mongolia in connection with its nuclear-weapon-free status. We are looking forward to their statement on security assurances.

Let me now touch briefly on banning two other types of weapons of mass destruction. International legal regimes banning chemical and biological weapons are already in place. We need to maintain and strengthen these legal regimes. The Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) has 139 States parties to date. The number of States parties to this Convention is increasing steadily. I understand that the draft agreement on the relationship between the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW) and the United Nations was approved by the Executive Council of the OPCW on 1 September. The United Nations and the OPCW are expected to sign an agreement this month. I am sure that this will further reinforce the CWC regime and will enhance the already close and cordial relationship between the United Nations and the OPCW.

The Biological Weapons Convention celebrates its twenty-first anniversary this year. The ad hoc group of States parties to this Convention is continuing its work to elaborate the verification protocol to the Convention, with a view to finalizing it next year. I sincerely hope that the States parties will be able to overcome their current divergence of views and to reach agreement as soon as possible on a regime that will strengthen the Convention. Moreover, I believe that the fifth Review Conference of the States parties to the BWC, which will take place some time next year, will provide an opportunity for a timely review of BWC-related developments and for renewing our firm commitment to the elimination of biological weapons.

The proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms is a global phenomenon which is affecting the security, stability and development of many regions of the developing world. Africa has been the region most affected. There civil conflicts have been greatly aggravated by the easy availability of small arms and light weapons.

Since the last session of the First Committee, there has been a growing recognition by the international community of the threat posed to international security, peace and development by the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. The urgency of addressing this problem is now being widely acknowledged at the international, regional and national levels. The 2001 United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects will offer an important opportunity to deal effectively with illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons. With the Conference preparatory process already under way, international efforts to combat the proliferation of and illicit trafficking in small arms and light weapons are gaining momentum. I would like to urge all Member States to demonstrate strong political will in order to ensure that this preparatory process will lead to concrete agreements at the Conference.

Considerable progress has been made in dealing with one particular category of small conventional weapons that has a devastating impact on efforts to rebuild societies after the cessation of hostilities: anti-personnel mines. Casualty figures in key countries have already dropped. The global use and production

of anti-personnel mines are now on the decline, and transfers have almost completely halted.

One of the important global instruments in the field of conventional arms control is the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons — an instrument under which full protocols dealing with specific types of inhumane weapons have been concluded. Preparation will be under way for the review conference of this important umbrella Convention, to be held in 2001. Both the States parties to the mine Convention and the States parties to the amended Protocol II to the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons are actively pursuing the implementation of their respective instruments. However, a great deal still remains to be done.

We have a vision, a vision that is reflected in the Millennium Summit Declaration: to rid the world of nuclear, chemical, biological and other weapons of mass destruction.

Let us therefore redouble our efforts to translate this vision into reality in a not-too-distant future and thereby advance the cause of disarmament.

Statement by the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs

The Chairman: On behalf of the First Committee, it is my pleasure to give the floor to His Excellency Mr. Jayantha Dhanapala, the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs, who will address the First Committee on the opening day of its substantive work.

Mr. Dhanapala (Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament Affairs): My congratulations to the Chairman and the members of the bureau on your election to guide the work of this Committee. Your diplomatic career in the field of disarmament, including your persistent efforts in the field of global nuclear disarmament, equips you well for the tasks ahead; your very comprehensive opening statement is proof enough.

With the opening of the first general debate of this Committee in the new millennium — on a day, 2 October, that also marks the anniversary of the birth of Mahatma Gandhi — it is surely appropriate to recall some of the extraordinary events we have witnessed this year. These events remind us of the important contributions this Committee has made and can make in promoting the development of a global rule of law in the disarmament field, even in the face of difficult obstacles.

The urgency of this endeavour is underscored by some harsh realities of our time. The world is simply awash with arms — some 30,000 nuclear warheads on the one hand, some 500 million small arms on the other. The Stockholm International Peace Research Institute has recently reported that global military expenditure has, for the first time since the end of the cold war, started to rise. The figure for 1999 was roughly $780 billion. Meanwhile, almost half of the world's population lives on less than $2 per day. Let the tragic contrast between these numbers touch the conscience of us all as we embark on our work.

The millennium has provided a unique opportunity for the world community to reflect on these sombre facts. It has stimulated a global inquiry into how each country — indeed each person — can contribute through the United Nations to the improvement of the quality of life on this planet. Members of this Committee will note, in this respect, that their leaders and their citizens who participated in the millennium-related events clearly and unambiguously endorsed the vital need for greater progress on several important disarmament issues.

Earlier this year, the Secretary-General's Millennium Report (A/54/2000) identified two important priorities in this field: the global elimination of nuclear weapons and progress in the control of small arms. These themes, among others, were echoed by over a thousand non-governmental organizations that participated in the Millennium Forum held in May. In August, the Millennium World Peace Summit of Religious and Spiritual Leaders, which I had the privilege of addressing, issued a universal call to abolish all weapons of mass destruction. This call was echoed in early September at the Conference of Presiding Officers of National Parliaments, organized by the Inter-Parliamentary Union. Culminating all these events, the historic United Nations Millennium Declaration of 8 September stressed the need for progress in eliminating all weapons of mass destruction, ending illicit traffic in small arms and light weapons and universalizing legal norms relating to landmines. The Declaration issued after the Security Council's Summit also stressed the "critical importance" of disarmament in the context of post-

conflict situations. We thus have a unique opportunity to convert this vision into reality.

These were not by any means the only positive developments in disarmament this year. Last May, the States parties attending the 2000 Review Conference of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreed on practical steps to implement Article VI of the Treaty pertaining to nuclear disarmament. These included an "unequivocal undertaking" by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. They also agreed that the achievement of this goal offers the "only absolute guarantee" against the use of such weapons — a conclusion that strikes at the very foundations of nuclear deterrence and missile defence as alternative security measures. The Final Document also reaffirmed that full-scope International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards were a "necessary precondition" for new nuclear supply arrangements — yet another step ahead for this new global norm.

The deliberations in this Committee over the next five weeks will reveal the degree of political will to implement these various undertakings. Because many of these commitments are legally binding, the success of international disarmament efforts will continue to depend heavily upon the rule of law, which requires careful nurturing. We have, for example, a variety of important treaties that still fall short of universal membership or that have not been ratified by key States. The Secretary-General drew attention to this issue during the Millennium Summit and his efforts resulted in several new adherents to six disarmament-related treaties. We have seen progress in recent years with respect to the Comprehensive Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the Strategic Arms Reduction Treaty II (START II), yet these treaties are still not in force.

We have three States with well-known nuclear weapons capabilities and non-safeguarded nuclear facilities that remain outside the NPT, while many other States parties have not concluded their respective IAEA safeguards agreements, including the Additional Protocol. In his remarks at the 2000 NPT Review Conference, the IAEA Director General noted that one State party "remains in non-compliance with its safeguards agreement", and that "the Agency has not been in a position since December 1998 to implement its mandate" under relevant United Nations Security Council resolutions with respect to another State party.

Meanwhile, despite persistent efforts to promote universal membership in the Chemical Weapons Convention (CWC) and Biological Weapons Convention (BWC), many States remain non-parties. Other efforts have long been underway to create a verification protocol for the BWC, a goal that, once achieved, will significantly enhance international confidence in full implementation by all States of their obligations under that treaty. With respect to Africa, the number of States parties to the Pelindaba Treaty continues to fall well short of the number required for that treaty to enter into force. And while discussions continue over a possible new nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia, significant obstacles prevent the creation of such zones in other key regions, including the Middle East, Central Europe, South Asia, East Asia and the Southern Hemisphere.

The failure once again of the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a substantive work agenda this year has also frustrated the negotiation of new international legal norms, as seen in the inability of its members to reach a consensus on terms for multilateral negotiations on nuclear disarmament, the prevention of an arms race in outer space and the fissile material treaty, while efforts to conclude a treaty on negative security assurances continue to languish in that important forum.

In the field of disarmament, it is, of course, difficult to have a functioning rule of law without transparency. In that respect, it is disturbing indeed that the peoples of the world still do not know for certain the number of nuclear weapons around them. The rule of law also presumes the existence of a credible means of enforcement, although the enforcement of disarmament norms remains one of the most difficult challenges facing the international community.

Yet the underdevelopment of the rule of law is perhaps most apparent in the field of nuclear-weapon delivery systems, despite the disarmament goal covering such systems found in the preamble of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). There are some grounds for hope that the international community will take up the challenge noted in April last year by the Secretary-General when he commented on the lack of multilateral norms with respect both to missiles and to missile defences. As international awareness of this problem continues to grow, one can well expect increased multilateral consideration of the issue. A similar problem exists

with respect to other delivery systems for weapons of mass destruction.

With respect to missile defence, the world welcomed the recent decision by the United States to postpone the deployment of a national missile defence system. Efforts must now continue to develop multilateral norms governing existing missile arsenals and the global missile proliferation threat, while preserving the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems as the cornerstone of strategic stability — yet another important goal identified in the final document of the 2000 Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The rule of law with respect to conventional arms remains severely underdeveloped, although the convening next year of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in all its Aspects offers an excellent opportunity for significant progress. The extraordinary death and destruction, particularly in the civilian sector, that has resulted from such weapons simply can no longer be ignored by the international community. This makes it all the more important for States to reach an early decision on a date and venue for that important conference and to proceed expeditiously with the business at hand.

I am pleased in that connection to report that I have just returned from witnessing the destruction of more than 1,000 small arms in a "*flamme de la paix*" at Agadez, Niger. That event, along with the moratorium on the import, export or manufacture of light weapons announced two years ago by the Economic Community of West African States (ECOWAS), illustrates some of the progressive disarmament activities under way in West Africa. Niger, with its desperate poverty, is endeavouring to nurture a fragile peace and a recently elected democratic Government. The Department for Disarmament Affairs, along with the United Nations Development Programme has proposed to embark on a weapons for development programme, for which the generous assistance of the donor community is urgently needed. Initiatives such as these deserve specific recognition and vigorous support throughout the world community.

Yet, two important United Nations tools for transparency and confidence-building in the field of conventional arms continue to show signs of stagnation and even regression in the face of reluctance by many States to make use of them. An expert group has been examining ways and means to increase participation in the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms, and I hope that their views will reach a wide audience and will receive close attention by all States that have neglected to use this specific tool. Many countries also have not used the standardized reporting instrument on military expenditures. At a time of rising military budgets, it becomes all the more important to have reliable information about the scope of this particular problem.

With respect to landmines, the States parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction and to the amended Protocol to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects are continuing their efforts to achieve full universality of membership in those important accords. Two weeks ago, in Geneva, the States parties to the mine-ban Convention held their second meeting and addressed several important issues, including victim assistance and the most fundamental goal of disarmament, namely destruction of stockpiles.

The agenda before the First Committee is, in the light of this brief survey, once again challenging and robust. The Committee's work will be closely scrutinized by groups throughout civil society that have played an increasingly proactive role in disarmament discussions, both inside and outside the United Nations system. Those groups help to build a solid foundation of political support for all types of disarmament measures. Their advocacy work parallels disarmament education efforts under way in the United Nations, efforts whose importance the Secretary-General's Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters has recently underscored. With firm determination backed by support and understanding from civil society, there is indeed potential for progress in all fields of disarmament.

The Committee also has a solemn responsibility to remain vigilant about emerging issues, a task that is performed with the assistance of another important component of the United Nations disarmament machinery: the United Nations Institute for Disarmament Research (UNIDIR), which is now

celebrating its twentieth anniversary. I congratulate its Director, Patricia Lewis, and her small but dedicated staff on their enriching the disarmament community with high-quality research.

I also want to take this opportunity to invite all members of the First Committee to attend a forward-looking discussion meeting hosted jointly by UNIDIR and the Department for Disarmament Affairs on disarmament as humanitarian action, scheduled to be held here in Conference Room 4 on Tuesday, 17 October. That event will explore the extent to which disarmament, whether of weapons of mass destruction or of conventional arms, can be viewed as a question of human security, as an activity with substantial humanitarian benefits. Today it is increasingly apparent that disarmament pays dividends that can serve virtually all the purposes and objectives set out in the Charter.

In the years to come, as disarmament gradually becomes increasingly mainstreamed as a fundamental United Nations activity, as I hope it will, the impact and importance of the deliberations of the First Committee will only grow as a natural result. The ultimate sustainability of disarmament, not just as a fundamental activity of the United Nations but also as a priority for action by national Governments and non-governmental organizations, depends not just on the ideals it inspires, but also on the practical results it delivers.

It is in these realms of norm-building and practical action that the Department for Disarmament Affairs seeks to make its mark. Although we are the smallest department in the United Nations, we have not let our limited resources erode our commitment to excellence and productivity in all our work. Our publications, such as the *Disarmament Yearbook* and the newsletter *DDA Update*, are widely used throughout the disarmament community. We continue to make indispensable administrative and substantive contributions to numerous international disarmament conferences and events. Our regional centres continue to assist in our outreach activities, making disarmament relevant to the practical needs of Member States. We work closely with Member States and with groups from civil society, and are committed to expanding that cooperation. We take our public information and education responsibilities seriously, and will remain a vigorous source of advocacy for all mandated disarmament activities and initiatives.

In that regard, I encourage all delegations to visit the new disarmament exhibit that will be located on the third floor of the General Assembly building. Messenger of Peace Michael Douglas will participate in the opening of the exhibit on 23 October. The Department has also, with the cooperation of the Department of Public Information, jointly produced an excellent documentary film about the global small arms problem entitled "Armed to the Teeth". This documentary, the first of its kind on this global threat, will have its premiere at the United Nations on 16 October in the presence of the Secretary-General, and I highly commend it to all delegations. It is an especially timely production.

Finally, the Department continues to train young diplomats, especially those from developing countries, through the United Nations disarmament fellowship programme. This year's 28 fellows will soon join the ranks of the roughly 500 other officials from more than 150 countries that have participated in the programme since its creation by the General Assembly at its tenth special session, in 1978.

On these encouraging notes, I offer you, Mr. Chairman, my most sincere best wishes for success and my assurances of the full support and cooperation of the Department for Disarmament Affairs in all your work in the weeks ahead.

The Chairman: I thank Mr. Dhanapala for his statement, which I am sure will contribute significantly to the Committee's deliberations.

Agenda items 65 to 81

General debate on all disarmament and international security items

Mr. De Icaza (Mexico) (*spoke in Spanish*): I would like to express, on behalf of my delegation, our satisfaction upon your election, Sir, to the chairmanship of this Committee. We are well aware of your expertise in the field of disarmament and arms control and of your diplomatic skills. We are sure you will conduct our work with great efficiency, and we offer you our support in fulfilling your important task. We also congratulate the other members of the Bureau.

We are grateful to Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala for the inspiring message he has been kind enough to deliver to us this morning.

Despite a less than propitious environment due to limited progress and new challenges, the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) held this year had a long-awaited positive outcome: the unequivocal political commitment given by the nuclear-weapon States to the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals.

This commitment re-established balance in the reciprocal obligations under the Treaty. It facilitated a new understanding between nuclear-weapon States and non-nuclear-weapon States and it strengthened the non-proliferation regime of those weapons.

The commitment must now be demonstrated without delay through an accelerated process of negotiations and through the adoption of practical steps to advance systematically and progressively towards a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Some of those steps are listed in the Conference's Final Document. Others, which are equally important and pressing, may and should be the object of future agreements, such as non-first-use commitments on the part of nuclear-weapon States, legally binding negative security assurances against the use or the threat of use of nuclear weapons against non-nuclear-weapon-States and the de-alerting of nuclear weapons and the removal of nuclear warheads from delivery systems.

For the time being, the programme of action agreed in the NPT Review Conference must be fully implemented. The delegation of Sweden, which in this Assembly coordinates the delegations belonging to the initiative "Towards a nuclear-weapon-free World: the need for a new agenda", will state our position in this respect.

In the Final Document adopted at the sixth NPT Review Conference, it was again acknowledged that the establishment of internationally recognized nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the region concerned enhances global and regional peace and security, strengthens nuclear non-proliferation regimes and contributes to realizing the objectives of nuclear disarmament, including the establishment of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

We will continue to promote the consolidation of the regimes established by the Treaties of Tlatelolco, Rarotonga, Bangkok and Pelindaba, reiterating our call on the nuclear-weapon States that have not yet done so to ratify the Protocols to those Treaties. We express the hope that the States of Central Asia will in the near future conclude the treaty whereby they will establish a nuclear-weapon-free zone in that region.

We support the consolidation of a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas, the geographical extension of which will increase as new nuclear-weapon-free zones are established, especially in areas of tension such as the Middle East and South Asia.

This year, we will submit with Australia and New Zealand a draft resolution on the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT), urging States that have not yet done so to sign and ratify the Treaty and urging all States to maintain their moratoriums on nuclear-weapon testing pending the Treaty's entry into force.

Mexico is committed to the total elimination of all weapons of mass destruction. This year Mexico presided over the Executive Council of the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons. We call upon all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction without delay. We look forward to the prompt conclusion of a relationship agreement between the United Nations and the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons, in accordance with the provisions of the Convention.

The year 2001 marks the deadline specified in the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group of the States Parties to the Biological Weapons Convention to conclude their negotiation of a protocol that would allow for the verification of compliance with the Convention's provisions. Mexico has approached this negotiation from two fundamental standpoints: strengthening the prohibitions through a broad verification mechanism; and strengthening and promoting international technical cooperation by implementing a series of specific measures that will include, for the first time, the establishment of a cooperation committee within the future organization that will promote, coordinate and review cooperation activities among the States parties.

The consultation process preceding the Convention's Review Conference has already begun. That Conference should be preceded by a special

conference for the adoption of the protocol. However, despite the identification of the main pending issues and the accelerated consultation process, it has not yet been possible to achieve an agreement on key aspects of the protocol, such as transparency visits, inspection triggers, biological agent production and stockpiling thresholds and dual-use technology transfers. The Mexican delegation reiterates once again that the protocol should completely fulfil the mandate of the Ad Hoc Group and consider the priorities of the various States that participate in the negotiation.

We have followed with great interest and no small concern the differences arising around the development and deployment of anti-ballistic missile defence systems. This is yet another issue that in recent years has eroded détente between the nuclear-weapon States. We recognize the historical importance of the 1972 Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty (ABM) for strategic stability. That stability is considered indispensable to continuing the gradual process of reducing nuclear weapons on the basis of undiminished security for all parties to the negotiations. We also acknowledge that the archaic doctrines of deterrence and mutually assured destruction no longer make sense and must be abandoned. Finally, we recognize that in recent decades justifiable concerns have emerged about the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems.

Negotiations are needed to address both new concerns and the need to preserve strategic stability. The announcement of the postponement of a decision to deploy a national anti-ballistic missile defence system, made on 1 September by the President of the United States, opens up the possibility for such negotiations to take place. Developments related to the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems affect the security of all States. Multilateral and regional initiatives must be promoted to deal comprehensively with this problem.

Mexico supports the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects, to be held in the summer of 2001. We consider that regional experience in combating the illicit trafficking in and manufacture of those weapons can provide the international community with the necessary foundation for agreement on a programme of action including provisions to strengthen national legislation in this area; marking of arms; export, import and transit licences; strengthening export controls; arms registers; information exchange; technical cooperation and assistance; and provisions for the review mechanism with regard to commitments entered into at the Conference.

We support the holding of informal consultations coordinated by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee for the Conference, to run parallel to the work of the First Committee, in order to make progress in the consideration of pending procedural and substantive issues. In particular, we believe that an exchange of views must commence on the content of the future programme of action. That will help us better to prepare for the second session of the Preparatory Committee, which is scheduled for next January.

The second Review Conference of the States Parties to the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects — to be held in 2001 — must be carefully prepared, for it provides an opportunity to agree on the prohibition or restriction of the use of weapons that have not yet been the subject of a protocol to the Convention. We are actively participating in the preparatory work, and we support prohibitions on the use of cluster bombs and finding solutions to the problem of explosive remnants of war, which kill and maim innocent civilians even after conflicts have ended, hamper humanitarian aid and slow down reconstruction in war-ravaged zones. We are also considering the possibility of proposing restrictions on the use of spent uranium munitions.

Last September we witnessed, for the second time, the global impact of the Ottawa Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction on the eradication of those cruel and indiscriminate weapons. Barely two years after its entry into force, there has been a drastic reduction in the number of mine-producing countries, an almost complete halt to exports of those weapons, a steady increase in the destruction of stockpiled mines and an increase in financial resources dedicated to mine action programmes and victim assistance. All that has led to a relative decrease in the number of victims and to more attention being given to their rehabilitation so that they may be fully reintegrated into the daily life of the community.

Notwithstanding the encouraging results so far, we are concerned that the resources mobilized for anti-mine activities are still far from sufficient to meet the identified needs in countries affected by such weapons. There is an urgent need to increase financial and technical assistance for programmes ranging from landmine clearance operations to stockpile destruction and victim assistance. We are certain that the enormous challenge of complying with obligations under the Ottawa Convention within the given timeframe can be overcome with political will and a firm commitment to the humanitarian cause. My delegation calls on those countries that have not yet become parties to the Convention to join the efforts of the international community to strengthen the code of conduct that makes the use or the very existence of anti-personnel landmines unacceptable. As in past years, the countries committed to the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines will submit to the General Assembly a draft resolution inviting all States to sign, ratify and accede, without delay, to the Ottawa Convention.

Once again, the Conference on Disarmament concluded its annual session without beginning any substantive work. This is all the more discouraging because the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) agreed on the need to establish within the Conference on Disarmament a subsidiary body with a mandate to deal with nuclear disarmament issues, and urged the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work.

We are not unaware of the difficulties that have emerged on the international scene that hinder the agreements necessary for the Conference on Disarmament to fulfil its role as the sole multilateral negotiating body in this field. We nevertheless express our concern over the stalemate in this most important body, which has, for all practical purposes, lasted for four years. The problem of disarmament and its role in the area of international security cannot wait indefinitely for the Conference to rouse itself from its lethargy. If it continues its inactivity, it will be sidelined; negotiations on arms control and disarmament will have to continue without it.

In this regard, it should be recalled that in the Millennium Declaration the heads of State and Government resolved to keep all options open for the elimination of all weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons, including the possibility of convening an international conference to identify ways of eliminating nuclear dangers.

We would like to express our satisfaction over the agreement reached at the 2000 substantive session of the Disarmament Commission on establishing a working group to examine an item entitled "Ways and means to achieve nuclear disarmament". We recognize that the Disarmament Commission is not a body in which binding international instruments on nuclear disarmament can be negotiated, but it is a forum in which different aspects related to this issue can be addressed in an open and constructive fashion. The successful outcome of the NPT Review Conference and the preliminary exchange of views that took place during the last session of the Disarmament Commission illustrate the viability of a multilateral approach to nuclear disarmament.

Mexico reaffirms its support for the convening of the fourth special session of the General Assembly devoted to disarmament, despite that fact that no progress made was in past negotiations because of persistent differences of opinion on its objectives and agenda. We, the States Members of the United Nations, should ask ourselves if continuing to postpone the session really serves the best interests of the international community in the area of the maintenance of international peace and security. We are convinced of the imperative need to examine the multilateral disarmament agenda and to take the necessary decisions to strengthen multilateral negotiation mechanisms on disarmament issues.

The efforts of the international community in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation are confronted not only with a deeply rooted culture of violence but also, and in particular since the end of the cold war, a growing complacency, despite existing threats and fresh challenges. Against this backdrop, the Advisory Board on Disarmament Matters decided by consensus to propose a mandate for the study of educational programmes in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation. The Mexican delegation has decided to sponsor this initiative, and we will be submitting a draft resolution on the subject to this Committee.

The window of opportunity for disarmament and non-proliferation that opened up with the end of the cold war seems to be closing. The climate of détente and of growing confidence and trust in the field of

security among the nuclear-weapon States has been eroded as a result of the war in Kosovo and of the controversy surrounding anti-ballistic missile defence systems. Negotiations on reducing strategic nuclear weapons have come to a standstill. The multilateral disarmament negotiation forum is at a stalemate, and military expenditures worldwide have begun to increase following a decade of major reductions.

In these circumstances, the positive outcome of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) is all the more significant. It is with the constructive spirit that prevailed at the Conference that we in the Assembly must build consensus around disarmament and non-proliferation measures that can realistically be implemented in the short term, preserving and strengthening the objectives that together we identified, particularly the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Disarmament and détente are mutually complementary and mutually reinforcing. The reaffirmation by the General Assembly of the outcome of the NPT Review Conference will help to create circumstances conducive to further progress in the area of security and disarmament. It will be of particular importance to confirm that the status quo in nuclear disarmament has changed and that it is now necessary for nuclear-weapon States to comply with their commitments under article VI of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons.

The Chairman: Since the next speaker, the representative of France, is speaking on behalf of the European Union and a number of other countries, he will be given ample time for his comprehensive statement.

Mr. de la Fortelle (France) (*spoke in French*): I will try not to take advantage of your kindness, Mr. Chairman.

I have indeed the honour to speak on behalf of the European Union. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union — Bulgaria, the Czech Republic, Estonia, Hungary, Latvia, Lithuania, Poland, Romania, Slovakia and Slovenia — and the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, as well as the European Economic Area member country Norway, align themselves with this statement.

Allow me first of all, Sir, to congratulate you very sincerely on your election to the chairmanship of the First Committee. The European Union wishes to assure you of its unconditional support in the discharge of your important task.

The international security situation offers both tremendous prospects and challenges that are inherent to our era. The many efforts under way in the area of disarmament and non-proliferation aim to consolidate international norms and contribute to the maintenance of international peace and stability.

The European Union, desirous of achieving progress towards these objectives, will continue actively to support international efforts in the areas of disarmament, weapons control and non-proliferation, with respect to weapons of mass destruction as well as conventional weapons.

The threat of the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems is a fundamental problem. The European Union therefore calls on the international community to commit itself to fight tirelessly against proliferation and to continue its efforts towards disarmament.

For the European Union, the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) remains the cornerstone of the universal regime of non-proliferation of nuclear weapons and the bedrock for the pursuit of nuclear disarmament. In this spirit, we support and encourage the implementation of the objectives defined in the Treaty, the decisions of the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and the results attained by the 2000 Review Conference, as set out in the Final Document adopted by consensus during that Conference. The countries of the European Union are resolved to participate in their full implementation. A total of 187 States are now parties to this Treaty, and we call upon those four States that have not yet done so to accede to the NPT.

The first of the measures called for in the 1995 decision on the "Principles and objectives for nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament" was adopted in 1996 — the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT). The importance and urgency of pursuing the signature and ratification process in order to allow for the early entry into force of this Treaty was recalled in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference. This is a priority for the European Union. No less than 155 States have signed this fundamental instrument in

the area of disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation. We call upon all States that have not yet done so — and in particular on those appearing on the list of the 44 States whose ratification is necessary for the Treaty to enter into force — to sign and ratify the CTBT without any further delay. In this respect, we welcome its ratification by Bangladesh, Chile, Mexico, Russia and Turkey, among those States that have ratified it since the last session of the General Assembly.

All the States members of the European Union, including those appearing on the list of the 44 States whose ratification is necessary for the entry into force of the Treaty, have signed and ratified the CTBT. The European Union has spared no effort to ensure that this Treaty enters into force as soon as possible and is of universal scope.

On 29 July 1999, the European Union adopted a Common Position aimed at moving towards this objective. At the Conference held in Vienna last year under article XIV of the CTBT, those countries that have signed and ratified the Treaty reaffirmed their determination to ensure that the Treaty is ratified by all and enters rapidly into force.

The European Union underscores that it fully endorses the efforts made by the Preparatory Commission for the CTBT Organization (CTBTO) to enable the Treaty verification regime to enter into force effectively and as soon as possible.

The negotiation at the Conference on Disarmament of a non-discriminatory, multilateral and internationally and effectively verifiable treaty banning the production of fissile material for nuclear weapons or other nuclear explosive devices — the fissile material cut-off treaty — would be another essential stage in non-proliferation and nuclear disarmament. It was recommended by the NPT Extension Conference as early as in 1995. The 2000 Review Conference strongly requested the Conference on Disarmament to agree on a programme of work providing for the immediate opening of negotiations on a treaty of this type and for the conclusion of those negotiations within the five-year period. This would be a priority for the European Union. The European Union deplores that no consensus has emerged up to now at the Conference on Disarmament to authorize the launching of this negotiation on the basis of a mandate approved in 1995. We call upon States Parties to take all measures to reach that objective as soon as possible.

The European Union wishes to recall its commitment to pursuing the process of expanding the Conference on Disarmament, the only forum for multilateral negotiations on disarmament and weapons control, and in particular to include those States members of the European Union still not members of the Conference, as well as four Associated countries that have submitted their request for admission to the Conference.

At the beginning of the last decade, considerable progress was made, through unilateral and bilateral efforts, in reducing nuclear arsenals. Agreements concluded in this area should now be fully implemented and should lead to negotiations towards new reductions, together with measures aimed at guaranteeing greater transparency, irreversibility and confidence. In this respect, the European Union welcomes the ratification by Russia of the 1993 START II Treaty. We hope that this Treaty and its 1997 Protocol will enter into force in the very near future for implementation within the planned timeframe. The member States of the European Union also hope that the negotiations on the future START III Treaty will begin and that the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty will be preserved and strengthened. In this regard, the Union noted with great interest the decision of the United States President not to authorize at this stage the deployment of a national anti-missile defence system.

The level of tension in South Asia remains a cause for concern for the European Union. We call upon the countries of the region to do their utmost to prevent an arms race in the area. We ask both India and Pakistan to join the international community's efforts to strengthen the nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament regimes — namely, by respecting their unilateral commitments not to resume their nuclear testing. We repeat our appeal that they fully implement the concrete measures under Security Council resolution 1172 (1998) that urge the signing and ratification of the CTBT. We welcome the fact that India and Pakistan are ready to participate in negotiations on a fissile material cut-off treaty for nuclear weapons and other nuclear explosive devices. We note that India has a system for controlling the exportation of materials, equipment and technologies linked to nuclear weapons, and we invite India to strengthen it. We ask Pakistan to show proof of the same goodwill and to play a positive role in this area.

The European Union reaffirms its commitment to the resolution on the Middle East adopted by the 1995 Review and Extension Conference and to its full implementation. We continue to support efforts to establish a zone in the Middle East, under truly verifiable conditions, totally free of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems. We ask the single State of the region that has not yet adhered to the NPT to ratify and sign it. The European Union feels that accession by all States of the region to the Conventions banning chemical and biological weapons would be an essential and significant contribution to regional and global peace and security. Moreover, we ask all States of the region to conclude an agreement with the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) on full-scope guarantees.

The European Union feels that nuclear-weapon-free zones established on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at by the States of those regions are important instruments to reinforce the NPT regime. Since this has been asserted in the principles and objectives adopted in 1995 and recalled in the Final Document of the 2000 Review Conference, the establishment and international recognition of zones of this nature strengthen peace and security, both regionally and throughout the world. We await with interest the entry into force of the Pelindaba Treaty in Africa. We also hope that the discussions between States parties to the Treaty on the South-East Asia Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone and the nuclear-weapon countries will soon produce results so that the latter can adhere to the Protocol annexed to that Treaty. We welcome the progress that has been achieved in establishing a nuclear-weapon-free zone in Central Asia.

Respect for the NPT is an issue to which the European Union attributes particular importance. The situation in Iraq continues to be a subject for concern, because now, more than nine months since the Security Council adopted resolution 1284 (1999) on 17 December 1999, there has been no effective resumption of monitoring in Iraq. We call upon Iraq to give its full cooperation to the new Commission, as well as to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA). We reaffirm our concern to see Iraq apply all of the relevant Security Council resolutions and, at the appropriate time, to provide the monitoring bodies — the IAEA or the United Nations Monitoring, Verification and Inspection Commission (UNMOVIC) — the necessary access to implement their mandates.

The fulfilment of guarantees by the Democratic People's Republic of Korea remains a subject of serious concern for the European Union. Despite efforts by the IAEA, none of the important issues outstanding since 1994 have seen any progress, and we call upon North Korea to cooperate with the Agency and to fully implement the IAEA safeguards agreement. The European Union calls also for a financial and technical contribution to the activities of the Korean Peninsula Energy Development Organization (KEDO) on the Korean peninsula.

The European Union welcomes the IAEA's adoption of a model additional protocol to the existing guarantees. Once implemented, the measures contained in this model protocol will have the effect of improving the IAEA safeguards system and will considerably enhance its effectiveness and will allow it to better detect non-declared nuclear activities. The European Union feels that the rapid and complete implementation of this model protocol will be a determining step forward towards the non-proliferation of nuclear weapons.

The European Union and its member States have concluded with the IAEA three additional protocols to the three relevant safeguards agreements, covering the 13 non-nuclear-weapon States and the United Kingdom and France. We will do all we can to complete the ratification procedures as quickly as possible.

The European Union calls on all States that have safeguards agreements with the IAEA to conclude and apply as soon as possible additional protocols to these agreements on the basis of the Model Protocol and to implement the agreements for general guarantees, while assigning due priority to these issues.

The European Union feels that the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction (CWC) marks a decisive stage in the disarmament process. Since its entry into force in 1997, the world has moved towards the abolition of an entire category of weapons of mass destruction and the elimination of existing stockpiles and of chemical weapons factories. This process is also helping to reduce real and persistent threats to international peace and security and to world and regional stability. The European Union is nevertheless concerned by the fact

that a large number of signatories have not yet ratified the Convention and that some countries have yet to commit themselves to disarmament and to chemical non-proliferation. It is extremely important that we pursue our common efforts to make that instrument universal. The European Union calls on States that are not parties to the Convention to ratify and accede to it as soon as possible.

The European Union welcomes recent progress in the submission by Member States of their declarations. We stress the importance of the precision and breadth of these declarations to a balanced application of the inspection regime. We call on States to cooperate in the implementation of all the verification measures provided for under the Convention. It is certainly no easy matter to implement a convention as complex as the CWC. It is important that the domestic laws of all States parties on this issue fully respect the requirements of the Convention. The States members of the European Union are ready, to the best of their ability, to provide their expertise to any State party that should request it. This assistance will complement the bilateral aid that several member States are already providing in this area.

The European Union gives priority to strengthening the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC). The fulfilment of this objective will depend on the outcome of negotiations, within the Ad Hoc Group of States parties to the Convention, on a legally binding protocol establishing a verification and monitoring regime. The European Union is pursuing its efforts to promote the successful outcome of these negotiations so that the protocol may be adopted as soon as possible by an ad hoc conference of parties to the Convention, which should be held before the Fifth Review Conference of the Convention. We invite States parties to join in this effort.

The States members of the European Union are actively participating in the negotiations of the Ad Hoc Group. They reaffirmed their ongoing commitment by issuing, on 17 May 1999, a Common Position on progress towards the conclusion of the protocol. This covers the following measures or guiding principles that are deemed to be essential to the protocol to the Convention: mandatory declarations and effective follow-up to these declarations in the form of visits; appropriate clarification procedures supplemented, if need be, by on-site activities; provision for rapid and effective investigations through the implementation of all necessary activities; the establishment of a cost-effective and independent organization capable of implementing the protocol effectively; and provision for specific measures in the context of article 7 of the protocol in order to further international cooperation and exchanges in the field of biotechnology. The States members of the European Union feel that such measures, guaranteeing a balance between the demands of verification and respect for the economic and commercial interests of States parties, will provide significant security guarantees that are lacking today.

The European Union hopes that the establishment of a verification and control regime for the 1972 Convention, which would be made possible by the adoption of the protocol next year, will soon complement the progress already achieved in the past 10 years in the field of nuclear, chemical and conventional disarmament.

With regard to the struggle against proliferation, the European Union stresses the importance of effective export control mechanisms. It is essential that all exporting States assume their responsibilities and take measures to ensure that the export of materials, equipment and sensitive technologies is subject to an undated monitoring and control mechanism. An effective export control system will provide guarantees for the peaceful use of goods, technologies and materials and thus facilitate cooperation in areas affected by technological progress.

The European Union remains convinced that the transparency of export control regimes, which are based on decisions made in the context of national sovereignty, can be promoted by dialogue and cooperation. We support the efforts being made towards transparency by the Nuclear Suppliers' Group and the Australia Group. The European Union welcomes the establishment of the round-table mechanism with non-member States under the Missile Technology Control Regime. This mechanism should allow broader dialogue with those States and enhanced transparency.

The European Union wishes to stress its concern about ballistic proliferation in the context of the campaign against the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. We believe that we should be moving towards the definition and design of ways to strengthen

the multilateral instruments governing that type of proliferation.

The destabilizing accumulation and distribution of small arms is another cause of great concern to the European Union. The illicit trade in small arms is closely linked to the excessive and destabilizing stockpiling and transfer of these weapons. The 2001 Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects should address violations of law currently in force on weapons and import-export controls, together with the underlying factors that prompt the excessive and destabilizing stockpiling and transfer of such weapons, including those factors covered in the reports of the United Nations Group of Governmental Experts. Thorough work in the preparatory phase of the Conference should allow the adoption of a comprehensive and integrated approach to security and development.

In this respect, the European Union openly favours a broad and general scope for the international Conference, which is to be convened under General Assembly resolution 54/54 V, with a two-pronged approach of prevention and reduction. The Conference should offer an opportunity, on the one hand, to consider effective means to combat and ultimately eliminate destabilizing stockpiles and distribution of small arms and light weapons, and, on the other, to contribute to the reduction of existing stockpiles to levels compatible with States' legitimate security needs.

The European Union will prepare for the Conference with the aim of attaining significant and important results, including a programme of action covering all spheres potentially subject to international cooperation on small arms and light weapons. One part of this programme could be the drafting of guidelines or a legally binding instrument. At the first session of the Preparatory Committee, the European Union submitted a working paper containing components or chapters for consideration in the preparatory work for the 2001 Conference. The European Union feels that substantive work under the various chapters should cover prevention and reduction, including measures within the context of post-conflict efforts. Similarly, every chapter should allow the consideration of those aspects that are related to supply and demand. This issue should also be addressed from an economic and social point of view, and in its aspects related to development.

The European Union (EU) appreciates the efforts made by the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee to carry out comprehensive, thorough consultations regarding the second session of the Preparatory Committee and the 2001 conference itself. Those efforts take into consideration the instruments already agreed upon by consensus within the United Nations, particularly the report of the Government experts regarding the objective of the conference. In view of the time-frame, the Committee has also presented a new working paper that elaborates on the elements or chapters that were stressed at the first official meeting of the Preparatory Committee. The document submitted by the Chair at the informal consultations, which were held in New York from 17 to 19 July 2000, brings together regional approaches to the process and the dynamic that derives from the intersessional programme of work. The text will also serve to prepare the work on the substantive issues, such as the programme of action and the principles that the conference should adopt. One of the EU's significant contributions to the outcome of the 2001 United Nations conference is its support of the candidacy of Sir Michael Weston for the chairmanship of this conference.

According to the European Union's way of thinking, the current session of the First Committee should take full advantage of the momentum that has been created and focus on the procedural aspects of the conference, so that organizational matters can be settled in a satisfactory manner. Once the procedural issues have been resolved, the Preparatory Committee can, at its second session, devote itself to substantive issues. We therefore call upon all States to take part in these efforts.

In the framework of the general strategy to deal with the problem of light weapons, on 15 November 1999 the Council of the European Union adopted a decision to allocate up to 500,000 euros to promote the control, collection and destruction of weapons in Cambodia. The Council of the European Union, on 17 December 1999 decided that the EU will contribute to fight against the destabilizing stockpiling and spread of small arms and light weapons in Mozambique. Financial aid of 200,000 euros has been earmarked for the transborder operations being jointly carried out by the South African and Mozambican police forces. This operation, known as Operation Rachel, involves the

location, collection and destruction of weapons in Mozambique.

As for the transfer of weapons, it is essential to carry out responsible policies if we wish to resolve the problem of light weapons. The Code of Conduct for Arms Exports, which was adopted by the Council of the European Union on 8 June 1998, establishes high standards for the administration of conventional-weapons transfers by the member States of the EU, who are invited to show restraint.

The EU on 3 November 1999 issued its first annual report on the implementation of the Code. The experiences of member States have been positive. The Code has established among Governments a new transparency in the transfer of weapons and enabled them to act in a more concerted fashion in the scrutiny, at the national level, of applications for authorization to export weapons. The Code has also provided member States a framework for discussing their common concerns when matters relating to regional stability and human rights are at stake. Other countries outside the Union have also acceded to the Code. The Central and Eastern European countries associated with the European Union, the associated countries Cyprus and Malta, the European Free Trade Association countries members of the European Economic Area, and Canada have also endorsed the principles of the Code. The EU calls upon other countries to follow suit. The EU is continuing its efforts to enhance the effectiveness of this important measure. On 13 June 2000, the Council of the European Union adopted the common European schedule of military *matériel*.

In June 1997, the EU adopted a programme for the prevention of illicit trafficking in conventional weapons and for combating this trafficking. On 9 December 1999, the Council of the European Union adopted the second annual report on the actions undertaken in the framework of the programme. This report emphasized that it is increasingly necessary to address the problems related to the illicit trafficking in and proliferation of small arms and light weapons, particularly in regions where there is unrest and where there has just been a crisis. The member States of the EU are making their contribution to resolving these problems by implementing national projects, by taking actions and implementing strategies under the auspices of the EU, and by taking an active part in the work of international organizations. This latter work includes projects such as the action taken by the United Nations in South-Eastern Europe, the draft protocol of the United Nations on firearms, and regional projects, particularly in Africa.

The contribution of the EU to combating the destabilizing stockpiling and spread of small arms and light weapons has been guided by the standards for common action adopted on 17 December 1998. The objectives of this action are to combat the destabilizing stockpiling and spread of light weapons, to help reduce existing stocks to levels that meet legitimate security needs, and to help resolve the problems caused by the stockpiling of such weaponry. This means seeking international consensus on certain principles and contributing to specific actions.

The EU underscores the importance of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. This is not only a confidence-building measure of international scope that promotes stability and security; this measure also encourages regional efforts to enhance transparency. However, the value of the Register depends on the extent of participation in it. The Union calls on all States to file, on time, the declarations registering their exports and imports and — so as to enhance the transparency and value of the Register — to provide information about their military resources and about purchases related to national production. The inclusion of such information will make it possible for the United Nations Register to be more comprehensive and useful. In the absence of transfers, declarations to this effect — declarations such as "none" — will also help guarantee transparency. The EU hails the work of the Group of Governmental Experts which met this year to recommend ways of improving the functioning of the Register; however, the EU regrets that the experts have not been able to agree on most of the measures that have been discussed. In this context, the EU reiterates its support for the strengthening of the Register, for its scope to be extended as soon as possible, and for it to become universal. In this regard, the EU also welcomes the Inter-American Convention on Transparency in Conventional Weapons Acquisitions.

Last year's Ottawa process was a success: the Convention on the Prohibition of the Use, Stockpiling, Production and Transfer of Anti-personnel Mines and on Their Destruction entered into force on 1 March 1999. The EU welcomes the fact that a large number of States have signed the Convention and acceded to it, which allowed it to enter into force quickly. The EU

notes with satisfaction that progress has continued since the entry into force of the Convention. Since the beginning of this year, 17 countries have joined the list of States parties, bringing to 107 the total number of States parties.

The EU underscores the importance of the full and rapid implementation of the Ottawa Convention, in particular with regard to the obligations to provide information and firm time limits for the destruction of anti-personnel landmines in mined areas and mine stocks and to assist victims.

In addition, the EU calls upon all States to work together to achieve the total elimination of anti-personnel landmines throughout the world. In this context, we would like to underscore the importance of the opportunity that the Convention, since its entry into force, offers to the signatory States to implement its provisions.

The EU fully supports the conclusions of the second meeting of the States parties that was held in Geneva from 11 to 15 September. In particular, the EU supports the reform of the intersessional programme of work that was adopted. The EU will continue its efforts to call on countries that manufacture anti-personnel landmines to refrain rigorously from exporting that type of weapon.

The European Union remains seriously concerned about the suffering that anti-personnel landmines continue to inflict on civilian populations and is determined to participate in international efforts to eliminate these weapons and to put an end to the humanitarian problem they cause. The commitment of the European Union is based on joint action, which was adopted just before the 1997 Ottawa Conference and sets the framework for specific action and financial contributions by the European Union for mine clearance activities, together with community programmes of development aid and rehabilitation.

The European Union is the main donor worldwide as concerns mine clearance, aid to victims and other activities related to landmines. In 1999 the European Commission and the member States allocated more than 103 million euros to activities relating to landmines. Contributions to community devices for mine clearance and for aid to victims amounted to approximately 29.9 million euros. The European Commission recently adopted a communication to the European Parliament and Council that describes the measures that will further enhance the catalytic role being played by the Union in combating anti-personnel landmines. The goal of the European Union is, at the very least, to maintain the level of its contribution for future actions, namely to allocate a budget of 185 million euros to combating anti-personnel mines between 2000 and 2006.

While duly taking humanitarian concerns into consideration, the European Union will focus its financial and technical assistance on States parties and on States signatories that fully abide by, in practice, the principles and objectives enshrined in the Ottawa Convention.

The European Union considers that, in order to spread and use more wisely the resources available for combating anti-personnel landmines, there must be better coordination of actions undertaken at the international level. The European Union supports the role of central coordinator that the United Nations has assumed in its United Nations Mine Action Service (UNMAS). The European Union underscores that the responsibility for combating anti-personnel landmines ultimately falls on national authorities in the country concerned. The Union therefore feels it particularly important to help countries to set up competent domestic structures and operational ways and means for mine clearance. In this respect, the European Union adopted on 9 November 1998 a decision concerning specific action in the sphere of assistance in mine clearance in Croatia and calls upon the Western European Union to put it into practice. The mission is clearly designed to give support, in terms of advice, technical competence and training, to the anti-mine efforts in Croatia. On 13 April 2000, the Council of the European Union decided to extend by one year the mandate of this mission. In the joint strategy regarding Ukraine, adopted in December 1999, the European Union committed itself to studying in 2000 the means of helping this country abide by its obligations under the Ottawa Convention.

The European Union awaits with interest the Second Annual Conference of the States Parties to Amended Protocol II of the Convention on Prohibitions or Restrictions on the Use of Certain Conventional Weapons Which May Be Deemed to Be Excessively Injurious or to Have Indiscriminate Effects. It is important for States parties to communicate the national reports that they have been called upon to produce to the Conference beforehand, and we

encourage States signatories to do so spontaneously. The European Union calls upon all States that have not yet done so to become parties to the Convention and its Protocols, particularly to Amended Protocol II, concerning landmines, and Protocol IV, concerning blinding laser weapons.

As Europeans we have to take the lead in taking responsibility for events which occur on our own continent. Europe must also draw up a European Security and Defence Policy capable of strengthening its external actions while maintaining full observance of the principles of the United Nations Charter. Last December in Helsinki, the heads of State and Government emphasized the determination of the European Union to develop a decision-making capacity, under the leadership of the European Union, that is completely independent in terms of civil and military crisis management.

The European Union has drawn up a comprehensive objective: by 2003, member States must be in a position to rapidly deploy and to support and sustain forces capable of carrying out all the so-called Petersberg missions, with a force of up to 50,000 or 60,000. Under the French presidency, a conference on the deployment of forces will be held on 20 November in Brussels to endorse the catalogue of forces of the 15 partners of the European Union that could allow the Union to reach this comprehensive objective.

The European Union will also seek to enhance its effectiveness in civilian aspects of crisis management. A civil crisis management committee was thus set up this past spring. Increasing our civilian police capacity has also been given high priority. Member States have set an objective: to provide up to 5,000 police officers for international missions covering operations of conflict prevention and crisis management. Within this comprehensive objective, member States undertake to be in a position to deploy 1,000 police officers within a 30-day period, so as to meet the need to have a rapid deployment capability. Our objective is to give the Union the capability of producing a prompt reaction to international crises using the entire gamut of instruments available to it, civilian or military. This capability must be regarded as an integral part of our foreign policy and joint security policy.

Interaction and complementarity between the military and civilian branches demonstrate the global approach of the European Union when it comes to crisis management. They also demonstrate our willingness to contribute to international peace and security in accordance with the principles of the United Nations Charter, and in cooperation with the United Nations and other organizations that play a central role in the structure of European security, such as the Organization for Security and Cooperation in Europe (OSCE), the Council of Europe and the North Atlantic Treaty Organization.

The OSCE is the only European organization where, in the sphere of security, participating States cover a geographical zone that goes from Vancouver to Vladivostok. Promoting and protecting human rights and fundamental freedoms, together with cooperation in the spheres of the economy and the environment with a view to prevent crises, are as important for maintaining peace and providing stability as political and military issues. The OSCE derives its strength from the fact that it represents a common platform for 54 States. It can detect conflicts at early stages and prevent their development, and each day it seeks to defend human rights and the rights of minorities, democracy, the independence of the media and the organization of free and regular elections. The European Union attaches particular importance to the success of actions carried out or scheduled by the OSCE in the field to control weaponry with a view to alleviating local tensions or to promoting the implementation of agreements.

The European Union welcomes the fact that the Charter for European Security was adopted at the Istanbul Summit, on 18 and 19 November 1999. The Charter for European Security is intended to build a new, democratic, peaceful and united Europe, free of any divisions, based on a cooperative approach to security, equality and solidarity between and among States, regardless of their belonging to security structures or arrangements and in full observance of the principles of the OSCE. It reaffirms the statute of the OSCE and the status of that body as an inclusive forum to promote security based on cooperation and helps enhance the capability of the organization to carry out its mission and coordinate its action with other international players. The platform for cooperative security, which is a fundamental component of the Charter, in this respect offers interesting prospects for cooperation and closer cooperation without any sort of hierarchy among the various international organizations and institutions.

At the Istanbul Summit, the European Union welcomed the adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces in Europe and the review of the Vienna Document on confidence and security-building measures. As in the past, these documents remain the cornerstones, conventionally speaking, of European security. These decisions help strengthen European security. The adaptation of the Treaty on Conventional Armed Forces is the culmination of efforts at negotiation undertaken since 1996 and reflects in the new limitation measures on heavy weaponry the real circumstances for security in Europe following the cold war. Here, new measures to enhance military transparency and to prevent crises reflect the determination of States signatories. The review of the Vienna Document is part of an ongoing process that began in 1990; that process is also aimed at enhancing military transparency, and we welcome it.

The European Union calls upon nations to spare no effort to attain those fundamental objectives: disarmament and non-proliferation. Multilateral work to that end must continue and must be stepped up as far as possible. The European Union hopes that at its present session the First Committee will contribute to that purpose, committed to the mission of the Organization: to consolidate peace and security through international cooperation.

Mr. Salander (Sweden): I have the honour of taking the floor on behalf of the delegations of the New Agenda initiative: Brazil, Egypt, Ireland, Mexico, New Zealand, South Africa and my own country, Sweden. First of all, Sir, allow me to congratulate you on your appointment as Chairman of this year's session of the First Committee.

In May this year, the States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) adopted a consensus Final Document. Never before have the parties reached agreement on such a broad set of measures designed to achieve the purposes of the Treaty and the implementation of its provisions. Such a result could not have been foreseen given the diverging approaches and perspectives in the years preceding the Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons. A body blow was dealt to the non-proliferation regime by the nuclear tests in South Asia in 1998. There appeared to be considerable doubt as to whether the principles and objectives agreed to in 1995 had been false gifts offered in exchange for the indefinite extension of the Treaty, and there were growing doubts as to whether all the States parties possessed the degree of commitment necessary to seriously advance nuclear disarmament.

Yet, at the very moment when the future of the Treaty and its non-proliferation regime appeared to be almost in jeopardy, the States parties demonstrated a singular and common purposefulness. They rallied to confirm the objectives and purposes of the Treaty, and unambiguously determined to bolster the global non-proliferation regime. The positive outcome of the 2000 Review Conference was made possible because the States parties definitively agreed to engage in nuclear disarmament as an achievable goal without further procrastination or prevarication. The five nuclear-weapon States, for their part, entered into a far-reaching political commitment. They have now made an unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals. While the Conference reaffirmed that the ultimate objective of States in the disarmament process is general and complete disarmament, the commitment entered into in 2000 was to the singular pursuit of nuclear disarmament.

Thus, the nuclear-weapon States parties to the NPT have finally agreed to proceed towards the achievement of a nuclear-weapon-free world. What had hitherto been implicit has thus become explicit, and with this act the Treaty is both reinforced and revitalized as the cornerstone of nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. With this commitment and agreement on the measures required to achieve our common goal, the States parties are well placed to proceed with the achievement of our shared objective of a world free of nuclear weapons.

We would have preferred to see greater detail and, in certain cases, more specific mandates contained in the Final Document of the NPT Review Conference. Nevertheless, we consider that the measures agreed all constitute essential elements which must be pursued in parallel by the nuclear-weapon States themselves and by both the nuclear-weapon and non-nuclear-weapon States working together. With such a clear road map, the States concerned in each case must steel themselves to the task of further elaborating each measure within the parameters of the mandates set and of advancing the negotiation and implementation of each instrument or arrangement, be it at the bilateral, the plurilateral or the multilateral level.

Of course, many of the measures included in the outcome of the Review Conference were already well rehearsed. That outcome includes the existing bilateral process between the United States and the Russian Federation, and it also addresses sub-strategic systems. It encompasses the entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the conclusion of a fissile-material treaty; at the same time, it anticipates the need to begin preparations for guaranteeing a world free of nuclear weapons through the development of verification mechanisms. It opens a new chapter by addressing issues related to the role of nuclear weapons in the interim until they are eliminated, including questions of operational status, and it entrenches the principle of irreversibility in disarmament measures. It opens the door to greater transparency.

But, what is novel and unprecedented is the recognition that all issues relating to the nuclear disarmament process, including questions of a diminishing role for nuclear weapons and of reducing their operational status, are recognized as the concern of all States parties and have for the first time been jointly addressed by all the States parties, even if the implementation of steps to give effect to undertakings in this regard lies primarily with the States directly concerned.

There is a range of instruments which must be urgently concluded and brought into force if we are to achieve nuclear disarmament. All States must contribute to this process, to which we have committed ourselves. The deficit in respect of the bilateral arms reduction process must be addressed by the parties as a matter of priority. START II has not entered into force. We welcome the significant step taken by the Russian Federation in ratifying START II. That treaty and its 1997 protocols must now enter into force. The commencement of START III negotiations must lead the way in demonstrating the unequivocal commitments entered into earlier this year, while at the same time preserving the international stability which the integrity of the Treaty on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems promotes.

We welcome the steps already taken by some of the five nuclear-weapon States with lesser nuclear arsenals. Continuing restraint by those States and further unilateral steps by all nuclear-weapon States will contribute to the early achievement of the goal of a nuclear-weapon-free world.

Multilaterally, measures agreed to as early as 1995 have been pending for too long. The Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty, concluded in 1996, has still not entered into force. Negotiations on a fissile-material treaty remain stalemated, and the prospects for legally binding security assurances for States parties against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons have become hostage to new doctrines. The agreement at the NPT Review Conference on introducing interim measures in the interval until nuclear weapons are eliminated necessitates action by the nuclear-weapon States and their allies. The international community will closely follow the implementation of these responsibilities by the States concerned.

As we meet here less than four months after the NPT 2000 Review Conference, it is clearly too early to expect results from the commitments and the undertakings so recently agreed. However, we can have no illusions that the success of the Review Conference has brought about a quickening in the pace of multilateral negotiations. The Conference on Disarmament continues to be locked in the stalemate of the previous three years. Hence, there were once again no fissile material treaty negotiations this year, nor is there yet much promise for negotiations next year. Entry into force of the CTBT remains as remote as before. When will be begin to deal with nuclear disarmament multilaterally? We cannot allow this stalemate to continue.

So where does the global disarmament and non-proliferation regime stand today? The patient is not cured, but a diagnosis has been made and a remedy prescribed. What remains is to make sure that the patient takes the medicine and that the patient reacts as expected. The NPT still lacks universal adherence. The seven Ministers of the New Agenda Coalition, meeting here in New York last month, focused on this issue and called for the redoubling of efforts by the international community to achieve universal adherence to the Treaty. They repeated their earlier calls to those three States which are not parties to the NPT and which operate unsafeguarded nuclear facilities to accede to the Treaty as non-nuclear-weapon States and to place their nuclear facilities under comprehensive International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) safeguards. Our Ministers stress the importance of full compliance by the parties with all the provisions of the NPT.

What was adopted at NPT 2000 is the property of all the States parties to the Treaty. Our seven delegations have come to this session of the First Committee with the intention of working together with the other delegations here present so that this will be underpinned by the United Nations in a resolution of the General Assembly. The resolution we will present to the Committee will reflect the outcome of the recent Review Conference. It will be set in the context of the commitment made by the nuclear-weapon States, which we have duly welcomed. It will accept the compromises which all parties made to achieve a common purpose and common future agenda. It will anticipate the achievement of an instrument, or a set of instruments, required to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons. It will offer no illusory fixes, but it will promise the consistent scrutiny of progress achieved and of any opportunities squandered.

Our seven Governments are determined to continue working together with all other countries to maintain vigilant oversight of the implementation of each of the agreed elements and to develop new approaches and new tasks where we consider these constructive and necessary to achieve a world free of nuclear weapons.

Mr. Pearson (New Zealand): We congratulate you on assuming the chair of this important Committee, Sir. You know that you can count on the full support of New Zealand in the pursuit of a productive and successful session.

For those of us who are determined to work for real progress on disarmament this has been another year of mixed results and good and bad news. Regrettably, the inventory of unfinished business on disarmament remains depressingly long.

The entry into force of the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) still eludes us. Negotiations on the Protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention are inching forward, but the pace of negotiation appears to be faltering. Adherence to the International Atomic Energy Agency (IAEA) additional protocols is proceeding too slowly. We are still no further ahead in negotiating a ban on the production of fissile material. A subsidiary body on nuclear disarmament has yet to be established in Geneva. Further movement on the START process appears to have stalled. Ratification of nuclear-weapon-free zones is still not complete. The Chemical Weapons Convention is not universal in all regions. Greater transparency in nuclear holdings has yet to manifest itself adequately. Universalization of the Ottawa mine-ban Convention is some time away. There is a lack of progress in establishing new nuclear-weapon-free zones. While the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is being tackled at the regional levels, preparations for a United Nations Conference next year and an international action plan have been marred by procedural manoeuvres.

Our responsibility must be to remind our authorities of the continuing gaps in the implementation and universalization of existing instruments. While progress was made recently at the Millennium Summit in consolidating support for existing treaties, repeated calls in this Committee for action require a better response. In pressing for new initiatives on disarmament, we must remain seized also of the real deficit in existing performance. Steps need to be taken to reduce this deficit, which is becoming an issue of credibility as well. It is a challenge for everyone to grapple with.

An ongoing priority for New Zealand this year will be working with our New Agenda partners in tabling a draft resolution that seeks to underpin the outcome of the review of the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). We shall be working closely with Australia, Mexico and Japan on a CTBT draft resolution calling for the early implementation of this crucial Treaty. And, with Brazil, we shall be sponsoring a draft resolution on a nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere.

The inability of the Conference on Disarmament, yet again, to reach consensus on its programme of work was conspicuously evident this year. We came close, tantalisingly close, to reaching agreement. That would not have been possible without the flexibility of some delegations and the very commendable efforts of the Conference on Disarmament Presidents this year. But it was, once again, just not enough.

The Conference on Disarmament cannot distinguish itself with failure for yet another year in 2001. We all know it has gone through periods in the past when negotiations have not been possible. It cannot mass-produce treaties with clockwork precision. Pre-negotiation is clearly required on some issues and should not be undervalued.

Despite evident shortcomings in its working methods, which require attention, we cannot realistically hold the institution itself responsible for failure. Accountability rests squarely with the Governments of its 66 Member States.

But another year of inaction is not encouraging for a body that claims to be the sole multilateral negotiating forum on disarmament. There are now risks to the Conference's credibility. And a body that does not produce results in today's world may begin to have a hard time convincing the General Assembly to allocate resources to it.

New Zealand remains totally committed to multilateralism and to negotiations in the Conference on Disarmament. We regard our membership as an act of faith. The Conference has delivered results in the past. The challenge now is to prove that it is still capable of doing so. If it does not, advocates of progress may look elsewhere. And the primacy of the United Nations may have to be asserted, as was demonstrated recently in the Millennium Summit call for convening an international conference.

Thankfully, negotiations are proceeding in Geneva on a protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention to ensure compliance with that treaty's prohibitions. However, after almost six years of negotiations, the pace of the Ad Hoc Group's work now appears to be faltering in the balance. New Zealand's endeavours remain directed towards completion of that important disarmament imperative as soon as is practical. Like all negotiations, the protocol must reflect a fair bargain between the varying positions. But we would prefer a more potent one than a bargain in which neither compliance nor cooperation objectives are met properly. To ensure that the protocol can be an effective watchdog against bio-warfare proliferation, it must have the prerequisites of a sensitive nose to sniff out proliferators, a loud bark to alert the international community and, when necessary, sufficient bite to deter those who would cheat on the prohibitions of the Convention.

We remain strongly committed to those goals, but we are disturbed by those who talk of compliance activities aimed at others, but persistently resist accepting that transparency requires reciprocity if it is to be credible. The same applies for those who call for the abolition of arrangements that help ensure compliance.

We are pleased that dealing with the proliferation of small arms and light weapons is now being addressed in earnest. Already, at regional, subregional and national levels it is recognized that this problem is a multi-faceted one that is complicated by interacting disarmament, humanitarian, law and order, developmental and other dimensions. Its characteristics, causes and solutions vary from community to community. Recent events in our region have challenged Governments to focus on the roots of violent conflict, which go much deeper than the issue of the weapons themselves.

There will need to be recognition at the multilateral level that the small arms problem will not be amenable to a quick-fix solution. Most immediately, there is the challenge of reaching agreement on a large number of outstanding issues in the firearms protocol negotiations in Geneva later this month. Dealing with small arms will be a long-haul exercise requiring a holistic approach. The United Nations Conference next year will be another step in the right direction. It may be, however, that the most effective multilateral response will be to support action at the sharp end, where the laborious but essential task is engaging communities in tackling a problem that turns their streets into combat zones. At the same time, the Conference might usefully direct its attention to existing international law, where this might be relevant to dealing with the proliferation of these weapons.

The Ottawa Convention banning anti-personnel mines, although not analogous, has been successful in this respect. The treaty constitutes a political framework for the practical struggle to rid the world of this hidden killer. Two and a half years after entry into force, there are many signs that anti-personnel mine use is now on the wane. One hundred and sixty-eight million square metres of land have been cleared, and in the last year 22 States parties completed destruction of their stockpiles.

But much more needs to be done. New Zealand wants to see universalization of this treaty, not least because of its clear humanitarian impact. We are not attracted to, and will not support, partial solutions on transfers once a new international norm has been created. And the international community might take a deep breath and re-examine the strengthening of the Convention on Certain Conventional Weapons. An issue that might usefully be addressed in this context is how to deal with unexploded remnants of war.

A particular achievement this year was the outcome of the Review Conference of the States Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT). It came after the deplorable challenges to the non-proliferation regime that took place in 1998 in South Asia. The pressure to breathe new life into the NPT Treaty has been strong, and the good news is that all parties to it responded constructively and positively. That outcome has bolstered confidence in the NPT regime, and for New Zealand it confirmed that our optimism about enhancing international security through disarmament was not misplaced.

The new and unequivocal undertaking to accomplish the total elimination of nuclear weapons is a source of particular satisfaction. We should be in no doubt that it is a singular step forward. It has removed for all time any ambiguity regarding whether nuclear weapons can be retained indefinitely. The total elimination of nuclear weapons can no longer be regarded as contingent on what is now the ultimate objective of general and complete disarmament.

There were other no less significant outcomes at the Review Conference, in particular the practical steps for nuclear disarmament. The agreement for greater transparency, reductions in tactical weapons, concrete measures to reduce the operational status of nuclear weapons and the application of the principle of irreversibility, for example, break new ground. They provide a much more coherent basis to achieve real progress in nuclear disarmament.

The NPT outcome cannot be regarded as an end in itself. There can be no stepping back from what was agreed. Nor can we accept that somehow the NPT outcomes exist in a vacuum or are quarantined by the confines of the Treaty's review process. Action on these new undertakings will take time, and we are realistic about that. While we are not questioning the commitments to them, the real test will be in the delivery. What we shall be looking for is evidence that these agreed steps are being pursued and implemented. In this process we want to see a sense of determination manifest itself. New Zealand will keep pushing for progress, together with our New Agenda partners and supporters.

Moving to the total elimination of nuclear weapons should now become operative policy. Justification for retaining these weapons permanently is no longer sustainable. We look forward to the commitments agreed at the NPT Review Conference finding expression in the policies of those States directly involved.

The concept of strategic stability has been given heightened attention this year. It is an issue that goes to the heart of the ongoing debate on missile defence. New Zealand has concerns about the possible deployment of a missile defence system if it were to retard or, worse, unravel the disarmament effort. We believe that great caution needs to be exercised in decisions that could have a negative impact on disarmament and arms control, and we would urge equal caution in ensuring that these decisions are not inconsistent with the total elimination of nuclear weapons.

The integrity and validity of the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty must be preserved. Measures that would undermine the Treaty's purpose of contributing to the creation of more favourable conditions for negotiations on further strategic arms reductions should be avoided.

The proliferation of weapons of mass destruction and their delivery systems has an impact on the security of all States, however. New Zealand considers that the best front line of defence lies in accelerating the process for the total elimination of nuclear weapons; strengthening the NPT and the supporting non-proliferation regime; fully implementing the Chemical Weapons Convention; delivering a sufficiently effective compliance regime for biological weapons; strict control on access to missile technology and components; and exploring other collective or multilateral options.

Every country has the right to determine its own security and defence needs. But unilateralism cannot guarantee international security, which is a collective concern and a collective responsibility. In assessing international security, we should be careful about placing qualifications on progress or, worse, misappropriating strategic considerations to conceal procrastination on disarmament.

Signs of hesitation about the utility of multilateral solutions are disturbing. It would be wrong, in our view, not to pursue the opportunities and benefits of collective responses and action. The pursuit of the new NPT undertakings should be a vital determinant for delivering enhanced security. Bilateral, plurilateral and multilateral engagement are absolutely essential.

Reinforcing our existing disarmament architecture is no less an imperative.

This year's NPT outcome provides one of the most comprehensive set of undertakings we have ever had for moving ahead and for delivering international peace and security. Let us be clear at this time that disarmament is a security-building process and not an optional extra.

Mr. Cappagli (Argentina) *(spoke in Spanish)*: May I begin, Sir, by congratulating you on your election to preside over the work of the First Committee. I wish also to extend congratulations to the other members of the Bureau, and to thank the Ambassador of Chile, Mr. Raimundo González, for the efforts he made during the previous session.

I should also like to thank the Under-Secretary-General for Disarmament, Ambassador Jayantha Dhanapala, for being with us and for the statement he made this morning, and for the work and dedication of his entire team.

The twentieth century was a time of war and revolution, of weapons of mass destruction and arms races. Resources were siphoned off that should have been channelled into development, and the environment deteriorated. But the twentieth century was also a time when peoples sought, through dialogue, cooperation and integration, to establish lasting peace and security. The twentieth century was also a time when major, signal commitments were entered into and enshrined in international legal instruments.

Since Hiroshima and Nagasaki in 1945, the international community has been, and continues to be, fully committed to the elimination of nuclear weapons. This commitment on the part of the 187 States parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) was reaffirmed at the recent Review Conference of the Parties to the NPT and took the form of practical steps to carry forward systematic, gradual endeavours to give effect to article VI of that Treaty.

In this regard, it is vital to implement those practical steps, particularly the appeal to sign and ratify the Comprehensive Nuclear-Test-Ban Treaty (CTBT) and the immediate start-up of negotiations within the Conference on Disarmament on a fissile material cut-off treaty. The international community continues to be committed to the elimination of chemical and biological weapons, and to the prompt conclusion of a Verification Protocol to the Biological Weapons Convention.

Making legal instruments on non-proliferation, disarmament and weapons of mass destruction universal in scope should be our objective for this nascent twenty-first century, because only in that manner will it be possible to lay the foundation for mutually guaranteed security as a primary goal.

The excessive accumulation of conventional weapons, particularly small arms, together with the devastating effects of anti-personnel mines, have been a source of concern in recent years because of their highly adverse effects on human security and on sustainable development. The only way to ensure that the efforts of the United Nations to resolve violent conflicts are not thwarted is to address the question of the instruments of violence — in other words, those weapons that affect the daily life of millions of people, particularly women and children. Hence it is a high priority to convene an international Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects no later than 2001.

The problem of anti-personnel mines is far from being resolved, but at least the international community has taken substantive steps, mainly within the framework of the Ottawa Convention banning landmines, in favour of mine clearance on humanitarian grounds and to promote the prohibition of these weapons throughout the world.

Given this scenario, as in the past, dialogue, cooperation and integration continue to be needed. Fully aware of this need, Argentina has adopted an international policy based on the strengthening of integration with neighbouring countries, the intensification of dialogue in the hemisphere, the banning weapons of mass destruction, an increasing limitation on certain types of conventional weapons and participation in the international arena, with a view to bringing about a peaceful, stable world based on the values of democracy, the rule of law, human rights, free markets and international cooperation.

The democracy, integration and transparency equation has had a multiplier effect that redounds to the benefit of inter-State relations. The Southern Common Market (MERCOSUR), Bolivia and Chile zone of peace is a reflection of the peaceful, cooperative security space necessary to our development. This approach of dialogue and

cooperation also prompts our participation in regional, hemispheric and international forums. Thus Argentine foreign policy is geared to promoting the elaboration of multilateral agreements that will reduce the threats to peace and facilitate comprehensive development, in a spirit of solidarity, among peoples.

If these agreements were to be based on more democracy in international relations, we are convinced that their effectiveness and lasting value would be enhanced.

It is now more complex than in the past to maintain international peace and security. Nonetheless, this should not be cause for paralysis; on the contrary, it should create greater impetus. General Dwight Eisenhower once said:

> "Every gun that is made, every warship launched, every rocket fired signifies, in the final sense, a theft from those who hunger and are not fed, those who are cold and are not clothed.
>
> "This world in arms is not spending money alone. It is spending the sweat of its labourers, the genius of its scientists, the hopes of its children."

This statement, from "The Chance for Peace" speech delivered on 16 April 1953, is a sound affirmation, and we have to bear its message in mind as we go about our work. When all is said and done, the possibility of a better world, with a minimum of weaponry to ensure the rightful self-defence of peoples, can begin here and now, in this very Conference Room, by creating a climate conducive to dialogue and mutual understanding, thus ultimately bringing about the political will necessary for us all to benefit from a better future.

Mr. Nguyen Thanh Chau (Viet Nam): It is a great honour for me to speak before the Committee on behalf of the Association of South-East Asian Nations (ASEAN), namely Brunei Darussalam, Cambodia, Indonesia, the Lao People's Democratic Republic, Malaysia, Myanmar, the Philippines, Singapore, Thailand and my own country, Viet Nam. At the outset, I wish to express our warmest congratulations to you, Sir, on your election to the chairmanship of this Committee. The ASEAN countries are very pleased and proud to see you, a representative of an ASEAN member country, discharging this important responsibility. We are confident that, under your guidance, the work of the First Committee at this session will be brought to a fruitful conclusion. We wish also to extend our warmest congratulations to the other members of the Bureau.

The fifty-fifth session of the General Assembly takes place at a momentous juncture in the history of the United Nations. We have very successfully concluded the Millennium Summit. The Millennium Declaration, which contains the commitments of our heads of State and Government, is a precious document. It will surely be the guideline for our work this year and for many years to come.

The ASEAN countries believe that the issues of nuclear weapons and illicit trade in small arms and light weapons are the highest priorities on the agenda of the United Nations in the field of arms control and disarmament, as emphasized by the Secretary-General in his Millennium Report. We strongly believe that greater and more vigorous efforts are needed to free humankind from the menace of nuclear weapons in the twenty-first century. To reach this goal, it is high time that all nuclear-weapon States support steady and systematic measures to eliminate nuclear weapons. We particularly endorse the proposal to convene an international conference to identify ways and means to achieve this lofty goal within a specified time frame.

The ASEAN countries welcome the successful conclusion of the 2000 Review Conference of the States Parties to the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty which took place in New York last May. We particularly wish to underline the commitment to an unequivocal undertaking by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals, leading to nuclear disarmament. The total elimination of nuclear weapons is the only absolute guarantee against the use or threat of use of nuclear weapons. Legally binding security assurances by the five nuclear-weapon States to the non-nuclear-weapon States Parties to the NPT would strengthen the non-proliferation regime. The final outcome document that was strenuously negotiated and adopted by consensus should be the guideline for our joint efforts in the field of nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation.

In this connection, we reaffirm our conviction that an urgent need exists for the nuclear-weapon States to take concrete measures to fulfil their obligations under the NPT, in particular Article VI on nuclear disarmament and Article IV to provide technical

assistance to non-nuclear-weapon States in the application of nuclear energy for peaceful purposes.

At the same time, the ASEAN countries are concerned at the continuing impasse regarding a programme of work for the Conference on Disarmament. We consider it vital that multilateral negotiations on a phased programme of balanced deep reduction of nuclear weapons commence within the Conference on Disarmament to ensure further progress towards the total elimination of these weapons. We also support the applications for Conference on Disarmament membership of the Philippines and Thailand in the belief that expansion of membership would contribute to making the Conference on Disarmament more representative and more effective.

We in ASEAN highly appreciate the efforts of the Russian Federation and the United States to reduce their nuclear arsenals in the START process, as well as unilateral measures undertaken by other nuclear-weapon States. We particularly commend the ratification of START II and the Comprehensive Test Ban Treaty (CTBT) by the Russian Duma. We note with regret that the United States Senate has rejected the CTBT, and we call on the United States to reconsider its position and ratify this Treaty as soon as possible.

The ASEAN countries attach great importance to the entry into force of the CTBT and will work harder with other countries to this effect. In this regard, the ASEAN countries wish to stress the importance of the Advisory Opinion of the International Court of Justice (ICJ) on 8 July 1996 and its contribution to the common efforts to promote nuclear abolition and world peace. We particularly endorse the ruling that the threat or use of nuclear weapons would be generally contrary to the rules of international law that are applicable in armed conflicts and the conclusion that it is incumbent upon all States to pursue in good faith and bring to a conclusion negotiations leading to nuclear disarmament in all its aspects under strict and effective international control.

For a few years now, under the leading role played by Malaysia, ASEAN countries have worked very hard together as co-sponsors to adopt a resolution to follow up the historic ICJ Advisory Opinion. This year, we will again sponsor a resolution along these lines. We wish to thank many delegations on this Committee for their unwavering support and encouragement and hope that our draft resolution will enjoy wider support this year.

We wish to highlight ASEAN's concerted efforts to promote the elimination of all nuclear weapons. As you are well aware, under the initiative of your country and with your own personal dedication, our Association has made tireless efforts to reach this goal. We have been co-sponsoring a comprehensive resolution on nuclear disarmament and nuclear non-proliferation since the fiftieth anniversary of the United Nations. It is the sincere hope of the ASEAN countries that this draft resolution will continue to garner increasing support and sponsorship at this session.

We in South-East Asia note with grave concern the proliferation of missiles in several parts of the world. This development does not bode well for security, stability and peace in various regions and the world over.

We therefore call on all States to exercise the utmost restraint in the development, testing, deployment and transfer of ballistic missiles and other means of delivery of weapons of mass destruction. We deem it necessary for the world community to take appropriate steps to develop effective legal norms against the proliferation of these weapons systems and we recognize the need for a universal, comprehensive and non-discriminatory approach towards missiles as a contribution to international peace and security.

ASEAN welcomes the commitment made by the States parties to NPT at the most recent NPT Review Conference in New York, particularly the Russian Federation and the United States, to strengthening and preserving the integrity of the Treaty between the United States of America and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics on the Limitation of Anti-Ballistic Missile Systems (ABM). We urge both States parties to the ABM Treaty to take no measures that will encroach upon the provisions of that important Treaty.

It is the conviction of the ASEAN countries that the establishment of nuclear-weapon-free zones constitutes an effective measure of nuclear non-proliferation and disarmament. It is also a laudable and useful confidence-building measure. We support all efforts of Member States to set up nuclear-weapon-free zones on the basis of arrangements freely arrived at among the States of the regions concerned.

In South-East Asia, a nuclear-weapon-free zone has been firmly established, thanks to the common efforts of the ASEAN countries. This non-proliferation regime constitutes a milestone and contributes considerably to the enhancement of peace, security and stability in the region. The South-East Asian Nuclear-Weapon-Free Zone Treaty, known as the Treaty of Bangkok, entered into force on 27 March 1997 and the Commission for the zone has begun its work.

The Protocol annexed to the Treaty, however, has yet to be signed by any nuclear-weapon State. We wish to reiterate the call made by our Minister for Foreign Affairs at the most recent meeting in Bangkok last July by urging nuclear-weapon States to accede to the Protocol at any early date. Once again, the ASEAN countries welcome the announcement made by China at the ASEAN Post-Ministerial Conference in Singapore in July 1999 of its readiness to accede to the Protocol and we call on the other nuclear-weapon States to demonstrate greater flexibility in their ongoing consultations on the Protocol, particularly in the direct negotiations expected to be held in the course of next year.

The ASEAN countries wish to underline their support for the efforts and initiative of Mongolia in taking measures to implement the resolution adopted by the General Assembly on Mongolia's international security and nuclear-weapon-free status. We welcome Mongolia's announcement that it expects the five nuclear-weapon States, at this session of the General Assembly, to issue a joint statement providing security assurances to Mongolia in connection with its nuclear-weapon-free status. In this connection, we wish to reaffirm that security assurances should be extended to all nuclear-weapon-free zones.

We in ASEAN see the nuclear-weapon-free zones as building blocks of a larger regime that will help to prevent the proliferation of nuclear weapons and to enhance the stability, peace and cooperation of the countries in various regions creating such zones. In this regard, we would like to express our strong support for the resolution on the nuclear-weapon-free southern hemisphere and adjacent areas.

While ASEAN attaches importance to eliminating the threat of nuclear weapons, we are fully cognizant of the need for the international community to address the problem of other weapons of mass destruction. In this regard, the ASEAN countries stress the importance for all States that have not ratified or acceded to the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production, Stockpiling and Use of Chemical Weapons and on Their Destruction to consider doing so at the earliest opportunity. We also welcome the progress in negotiating a verification protocol to strengthen the Convention on the Prohibition of the Development, Production and Stockpiling of Bacteriological (Biological) and Toxin Weapons and on Their Destruction (BWC) by the Ad Hoc Group of States parties to the BWC.

One of the important issues on the agenda of the Committee is surely the question of the illicit trade in small arms and light weapons. ASEAN shares the concerns of the world community over the adverse impact of small arms on the lives of civilians and children in various armed conflicts in many parts of the world. In line with this, we highly appreciate the efforts of the world community to find ways and means to address this issue, including the convening of the United Nations Conference on the Illicit Trade in Small Arms and Light Weapons in All Its Aspects. ASEAN countries will make every effort to ensure a successful conclusion of the Conference.

At the same time, joint efforts to address the issue should take into account the right of all States to take measures in self-defence, in accordance with Article 51 of the United Nations Charter, as well as the specific circumstances of different regions of the world.

The ASEAN countries attach tremendous importance to the confidence-building efforts of the countries in the region. Through the steady progress of the ASEAN Regional Forum (ARF), various initiatives and concrete measures have been undertaken to enhance regional security, which also help to advance global disarmament objectives. The recent admission of the Democratic People's Republic of Korea to ARF in July marked an important step forward in the Forum's development. We welcome the contributions of countries participating in the Forum for the enhancement of mutual understanding and cooperation in the region.

We also wish to take this opportunity to express our appreciation to the United Nations Regional Centre for Peace and Disarmament in Asia and the Pacific for its significant contributions to promoting regional and subregional dialogue and mutual understanding among member States on security and disarmament matters.

We firmly believe that the frequent meetings and workshops organized by the Centre are highly useful and beneficial to the countries of the region. We support the recommendations made in the Secretary-General's report on the Centre, as they appear in document A/55/181.

As regards the relocation of the Centre, ASEAN countries are of the view that further consultations are needed to address this issue properly so that the Centre will operate in a more effective and efficient manner, to the satisfaction of all countries concerned. We are also of the view that, until a satisfactory solution can be found to this issue, the Centre should continue to operate under the present arrangement. We also believe that, in addressing the issue of relocating the Centre, all possibilities should be explored so that such a relocation will not affect its effective functioning.

At the dawn of a new millennium, it is the wish of the ASEAN countries that all efforts be exerted to make use of the opportunity to work for a more peaceful and better world.

Mr. Araujo Castro (Brazil): Having worked for a number of years as a First Committee representative and having had the privilege of chairing the Disarmament Commission, it is a pleasure for me to return to this conference room and to participate once again in the annual deliberations of the General Assembly on disarmament and related matters.

I wish to express our congratulations to you, Sir, on your election as Chairman of this Committee. Please accept our best wishes and the assurance that you will have the full cooperation of the Brazilian delegation. You have inherited a First Committee that was conducted last year with ability and professionalism by a fellow Latin American representative, Ambassador Raimundo González of Chile.

I wish also to express our appreciation for the work that is being carried out by the Department for Disarmament Affairs under the leadership of Under-Secretary-General Dhanapala and to thank him for the thoughtful statement he made this morning to the Committee.

This general debate should permit a collective reflection on why political commitments and words do not always translate into deeds and on how the international community can work to build on progress achieved in different areas, in particular in the field of nuclear disarmament. The results of the Sixth Review Conference of the Parties to the Treaty on the Non-Proliferation of Nuclear Weapons (NPT) were of special significance to all of us. I would stress the relevance of steps such as the unequivocal commitment by the nuclear-weapon States to accomplish the total elimination of their nuclear arsenals and the adoption of a robust programme of action by the Treaty parties.

This unequivocal commitment is now a milestone on the path by which the international community is expected to carry on its efforts to achieve the elimination of nuclear weapons. As Brazilian Foreign Minister Luiz Felipe Lampreia told the General Assembly, the results of the Conference

> "will be a litmus test for future advances in the nuclear disarmament field". *(A/55/PV.10)*

The spirit of cooperation and sense of responsibility that prevailed on that occasion should be sustained.

Having participated for the first time in a Review Conference as a party to the NPT, Brazil is proud to have contributed, as a member of the New Agenda Coalition, to its positive outcome. The wide support then gathered by the working document presented by the Coalition was a confirmation of our common interest in nuclear disarmament and non-proliferation. We hope that the New Agenda draft resolution to be put to this Committee can enjoy the same level of support. I will not dwell on the current context of nuclear disarmament and on the pressing challenges ahead of us, since the Brazilian thoughts on these matters are reflected in the ministerial communiqué (A/C.1/55/3) issued by the New Agenda Coalition countries on 13 September. We welcome the statement by Ambassador Salander of Sweden on behalf of the seven delegations of the New Agenda Coalition.

Allow me to add that during its presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, in July and August of this year, Brazil tried to broker an agreement on the programme of work of that body. Despite the talent and the dedication of Ambassador Celso Amorim, a final consensus eluded us, but we were satisfied by the level of support achieved by the Brazilian proposal and by the fact that, as reflected in the Conference on Disarmament report to the General Assembly, the Conference on Disarmament membership recognized the support of the Conference for the text as a basis for further, intensified consultations.

The experience of the Conference on Disarmament underscores the urgency of reinforcing the multilateral machinery of disarmament and non-proliferation. It is not comforting to see that this machinery runs the risk of rusting — in the words of the Secretary-General in his opening statement to the NPT Review Conference — due to an "apparent lack of political will to use it". A paralysed Conference on Disarmament is to no one's benefit.

In the same sense, Brazil attaches great importance to the United Nations Disarmament Commission as a universal forum which can and should be used for discussing new ideas and proposals in the field of disarmament. I personally had the opportunity of working closely with the Commission in the early 1990s, chairing one of its working groups in 1991 and acting as Vice-Chairman in 1992 and as Chairman of the Disarmament Commission for its 1993 session.

Bearing in mind current multilateral work in the field of disarmament, it is interesting to recall that during the Commission's 1993 session we were able to conduct quite meaningful deliberations on three subjects: nuclear disarmament and the elimination of nuclear weapons; regional approaches to disarmament; and the role of science and technology in the context of international security and disarmament, which included discussion of questions related to the transfer of high technology with military applications.

As noted in the non-paper recently circulated in Geneva by the Brazilian presidency of the Conference on Disarmament, we should bear in mind that disarmament mechanisms are

> "influenced by and responsive to developments in the international strategic scene which affect the security interests of individual States".

One of the most visible issues that could affect the international strategic scene was removed, for the short-term, from the list of possible worrisome developments. As regards the future of missile defences, we are confident that both parties to the Anti-Ballistic Missile (ABM) Treaty will refrain from the implementation of any measure that would undermine the Treaty's purpose or its integrity and validity. Brazil also hopes that the United States' decision to put off initial work on a national missile defence system can promote understanding and progress in multilateral disarmament forums, especially in the Conference on Disarmament.

Limiting the geographical space where nuclear weapons are deployed is, for Brazil, a powerful message that non-nuclear-weapon States can deliver regarding their disagreement with the retention of this armament. We are committed to the consolidation of existing, and the creation of new, nuclear-weapon-free zones.

Together with other countries, as announced this morning by Ambassador Pearson of New Zealand, Brazil intends to present once again to this Committee a draft resolution on freeing the southern hemisphere and adjacent areas of nuclear weapons. We are convinced that freeing the southern hemisphere from nuclear weapons is a common initiative of interest to all members of nuclear-weapon-free zones as well as to other countries.

Brazil commends the work done by the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons (OPCW), under the leadership of its Director-General, Ambassador José Maurício Bustani. The Brazilian Government is sparing no effort to fulfil its obligations under the Chemical Weapons Convention, including by presenting its annual declaration of activities in the chemical industry and by successfully hosting, to date, five inspections in our chemical industries and the first simulation of a challenge inspection in a private industry.

As a reaffirmation of our support for the implementation of the Chemical Weapons Convention and of our commitment to the elimination of all chemical weapons, our President, Fernando Henrique Cardoso, will visit the OPCW headquarters in The Hague next week, during his official visit to the Netherlands.

In the field of conventional weapons as well, the disarmament community has been active. Brazil had the opportunity to reaffirm its commitment to the banning of anti-personnel landmines on the occasion of the second meeting of the States parties to the Ottawa Convention, which was held in Geneva some weeks ago. We have joined the international mine-clearance efforts, sending personnel to perform such activities in the context of United Nations missions in Angola and providing assistance and experts to mine-clearance operations in South and Central America.

Brazil is actively participating in the preparatory process for the 2001 conference on the illicit trade in small arms. As we have been pointing out, the destabilizing accumulation of small arms is, from a South American perspective, mainly related to organized crime and urban violence. Brazil hopes that the scheduled informal consultations on this issue will permit us to define the venue and date of the conference, as well as provide a good basis for understanding on other outstanding matters related to the event. Among these matters is the participation of non-governmental organizations, which we support.

As foreseen, we will have before us the report of the Group of Governmental Experts mandated by this Committee to review the functioning of the United Nations Register of Conventional Arms. Brazil has been providing detailed information to the Register since its inception, and invites other countries to do the same. We endorse the observations and conclusions of the report, and underline the importance of achieving universality for the Register, so that it can fulfil its envisaged role as a credible and useful global confidence-building measure.

Also in the field of conventional arms, it is our opinion that the First Committee should pay attention to the worrisome trend of qualitative armament and the increased sophistication of conventional arsenals, especially among the major military Powers. We believe this tendency contradicts the disarmament goals of the international community and ignores the calls that this Committee and the General Assembly have made repeatedly for a decrease in military expenditures.

Brazil is proud to belong to a region that is free of international conflicts. Latin America and the Caribbean countries traditionally present low levels of military expenditure. Defence procurement in our region aims basically at the replacement of obsolete material.

The commitment of our region to peace and disarmament is reflected in a number of regional and subregional instruments that attest to our common purpose of integration and development. The Treaty of Tlatelolco, which created the first nuclear-weapon-free zone in an inhabited area of the world, and the Zone of Peace and Cooperation of the South Atlantic are meaningful examples of this determination.

In the South Cone, even prior to the Chemical Weapons Convention, Argentina, Brazil and Chile renounced, by the 1991 Mendoza Declaration, the use, production, acquisition, stockpiling and transfer of chemical and biological weapons. We were subsequently joined by Paraguay, Uruguay, Bolivia and Ecuador. Later, the Political Declaration of Ushuaia, in 1998, established the Southern Cone Common Market (MERCOSUR) countries and Bolivia and Chile as a Zone of Peace, free of weapons of mass destruction.

All those progressive steps dating back to the 1960s were complemented and reinforced by the decision to establish a South American Zone of Peace, announced in Brasilia on 1 September 2000, by the Presidents of all the countries of South America. In the Brasilia Communiqué, which was then adopted and whose text has been distributed in document A/55/375, our Presidents also encouraged the deepening of the dialogue on security in South America, taking into account the human, economic and social aspects of the issue.

In matters relating to international security, we reject the logic of power through arms, and we firmly believe in the value of cooperation among nations based on dialogue and understanding and on respect for the United Nations Charter and other rules of international law.

We are of the view that all weapons of mass destruction should be banned as a matter of priority. No other disarmament goal is more imperative. Chemical and biological weapons are being dealt with. Nuclear weapons remain to be eliminated. The retention of nuclear weapons is illegitimate and a constant threat to humanity.

In the Millennium Summit Declaration we resolved, at the highest levels of our Governments,

> "To strive for the elimination of weapons of mass destruction, particularly nuclear weapons" (*A/RES/55/2 para.9*)

It is now time to act. By translating this commitment into practice we will be heeding the appeals of all our peoples for a safer world.

Election of the Vice-Chairmen

The Chairman: At its second meeting, held on 14 September, the First Committee elected Ms. Petra Schneebauer of Austria and Mr. Alberto Guani of

Uruguay as Vice-Chairmen. It decided to postpone the election of other officers to a later date.

Today I am pleased to inform the Committee that, as a result of intensive consultations, the Group of African States has nominated Mr. Abdelkader Mesdoua of Algeria as a candidate for the remaining vacant post of Vice-Chairman. In the absence of other nominations, and recalling rule 113 of the rules of procedure and the established practice, I shall take it that the Committee wishes to dispense with the secret ballot and to declare Mr. Mesdoua elected Vice-Chairman of the First Committee by acclamation.

It was so decided.

The Chairman: May I express to the Vice-Chairman my warmest congratulations on the distinction that has been conferred upon him and assure him of my utmost support and cooperation in the joint discharge of the responsibilities incumbent upon us.

Election of other officers

The Chairman: So far we have received no nomination from the Group of Eastern European States. I request the regional group to come forward with the nomination of the candidate for the remaining post of Rapporteur, so that we may complete the composition of the Bureau as soon as possible.

Organization of work

The Chairman: I remind the Committee that, in accordance with the Committee's decision, the list of speakers for the general debate on all disarmament and international security agenda items will be closed today at 6 p.m. I urge the interested delegations to inscribe their names on the list of speakers as soon as possible. For conference services, 30 copies of the prepared statements should be provided to the Secretariat. For general distribution, 250 copies will be required.

Moreover, it should be noted that, as agreed at the organizational meeting, the deadline for the submission of draft resolutions has been set at 6 p.m. on Friday, 13 October. This deadline will be strictly implemented, as last year. In this context, I urge members to submit draft resolutions as early as possible, especially "traditional" draft resolutions and the draft resolutions which might entail financial implications.

I also have an important announcement concerning the informal meetings and other activities in connection with the forthcoming United Nations conference on small arms. As a result of consultations with the Chairman of the Preparatory Committee, on Friday, 6 October, Friday, 13 October and Monday, 16 October the First Committee will meet from 3 p.m. to 4 p.m., and the informal consultations on small arms, under the chairmanship of Ambassador Santos of Mozambique, will follow thereafter from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m. If there should be a need for an additional one or two meetings, we shall organize them in consultations with Ambassador Santos at a later stage.

I would like to reiterate the two requests I made at the organizational meeting, namely, that those present switch off cellular phones during proceedings of the Committee and that representatives observe punctuality so that we may start our meetings promptly and make the optimum use of available conference services.

Expression of condolences to Dominica and Canada

The Chairman: I should like to express on behalf of the members of the Committee, as well as on my own behalf, our profound condolences to the delegation of Dominica on the sudden passing away of its Prime Minister, Mr. Roosevelt Douglas, as well as to the delegation of Canada on the demise of its former Prime Minister, Mr. Pierre Trudeau.

The meeting rose at 1.20 p.m.